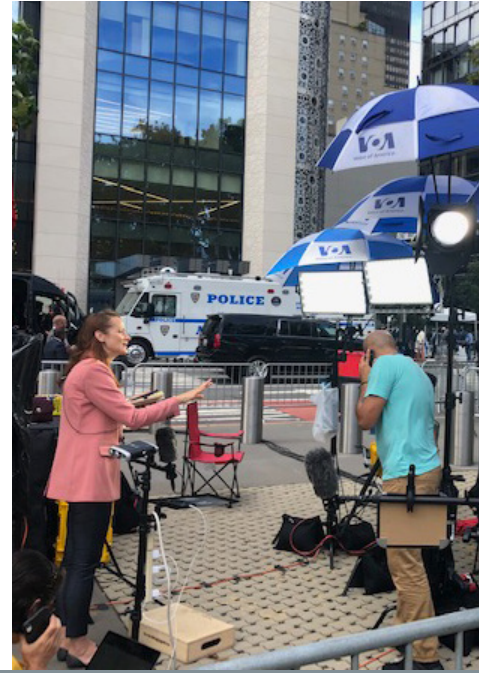




U.S. AGENCY FOR  
GLOBAL MEDIA



# FY 2021 Performance and Accountability Report



# Message from the U.S. Agency for Global Media Acting CEO

On behalf of the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM), I am pleased to present the Performance and Accountability Report (PAR) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021. This report contains the results of this year's audit of the agency's financial statements, measures performance against FY 2021 objectives, highlights the accomplishments of the past year, and identifies future challenges.

The mission of USAGM is to inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy. USAGM accomplishes this mission through two federal entities: the Voice of America (VOA) and the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB); and four USAGM-funded grantees: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Radio Free Asia (RFA), the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN), and the Open Technology Fund (OTF), which was established as an independent grantee at the end of FY 2019.

Despite significant operational challenges in FY 2021, from leadership transition to pandemic limitations, the news and information programming of USAGM's networks reached a worldwide measured audience of 394 million people in 62 languages each week. This represents an increase of 40 million from last year's record audience. This audience growth occurred in several key markets – including Turkey, Burma, and Vietnam – as well as from previously unsurveyed markets, including India and the Philippines. USAGM continued to reach large audiences in countries of key U.S. national security and foreign affairs interest, including Russia, China, and Iran.

USAGM upholds freedom of expression and information as universal human rights, and it does so by exemplifying and supporting free media that foster and sustain free and democratic societies. USAGM's networks pursue this mission by providing global audiences with engaging content on television, radio, internet, and social and mobile platforms. We work closely with media partners around the world to bring their compelling content into local markets, establishing valuable connections to critical institutions that, in turn, support civil society and democratic principles.



With access to media expanding around the world, information is more powerful than ever. However, the existence of more media does not yield more press freedom. Well-funded state and non-state media outlets inundate audiences with disinformation about current affairs to the severe detriment of U.S. national security. According to Reporters Without Borders, the COVID-19 pandemic has been used as grounds to disrupt journalists' work around the world, resulting in a dramatic deterioration in media freedom and people's access to information – the worst since 2013, when the current evaluation method was adopted.

Nevertheless, USAGM's award-winning and highly professional journalists expose disinformation and extremist propaganda in over 100 markets by reporting the truth and reaching people who need fact-based journalism the most. As people around the world struggled to deal with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic this year, record numbers turned to USAGM networks, especially on digital platforms. Our networks responded with programming they could trust, often times in contrast to the disinformation their governments were providing.

Our journalists provide empirical, compelling alternatives to the disinformation emanating from Moscow and Beijing. RFE/RL, VOA, and their joint venture Current Time covered all aspects of Russian and U.S. politics, developments in the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccinations, and a host of other local and international issues. VOA, RFA, and RFE/RL followed closely the situations in Hong Kong and Xinjiang, as well as China's growing influence around the world. Our networks' coverage of China resulted in record levels of digital traffic from audiences inside of China who used our circumvention tools to access the uncensored internet.

With programming in 62 languages, thousands of media partners, and on-the-ground reporting capabilities around the world, USAGM networks are poised to react quickly in crisis situations. In FY 2021, USAGM surged transmissions and resources to expand access to much-needed information after major turmoil in places like Ethiopia, Burma, Cuba, and Afghanistan, as well as following the presidential assassination and the devastating earthquake in Haiti. OTF ensured secure internet access and emergency assistance for journalists, human rights defenders, and activists.

In FY 2021, USAGM expanded its reach to some of the most vulnerable populations around the world. To engage the more than 80 million forcibly displaced persons worldwide – communities uniquely deprived of fact-based information and, as a result, especially vulnerable to poverty and exploitation – VOA strengthened its journalistic coverage of forcible displacement and increased access to its programming for refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) with daily Rohingya-language news broadcasts for Bangladesh and two new FM transmitters in refugee camps in Kenya. USAGM also continued to produce targeted programming for audiences at risk of and affected by violent extremism, covering it as a news topic, but also working to engage and connect audiences, addressing the root causes of extremism such as poverty, marginalization, and disenfranchisement. Examples include the extensive coverage of the Taliban and ISIS-K in South Asia and ISIS in Syria and the Sahel, as well as innovative programming such as MBN’s \$2 series which raised awareness about the daily struggles of poor communities.

In order to have impact with audiences, USAGM must provide quality programming and earn the trust of audiences. We monitor that progress through our impact model, which tracks engagement, connection, and influence with audiences, media institutions, and governments through a range of quantitative, qualitative, digital, and holistic indicators. As demonstrated by the high levels of impact on a range of measures, USAGM is reaching larger audiences than ever with content that they trust and find useful. Trust is a national security asset, and research shows that we deliver it in some of the most important markets we operate in.

The financial and performance data presented in this report are fundamentally complete and reliable. We are pleased that the independent auditors have again given our financial statements an unmodified opinion. We recognize there are a number of items identified by the external audit that will require our continued attention and diligent improvement. To that end, we are committed to directly addressing these challenges and reinforcing progress.



I am proud to share USAGM's FY 2021 achievements in this report. We strive to effectively and efficiently steward the resources entrusted to us to further our mission and impact audiences like no other media organization in the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelu Chao', with a stylized, cursive script.

Kelu Chao  
Acting Chief Executive Officer  
November 15, 2021

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>7</b>
 <b>Section 1: Management's Discussion and Analysis .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Organizational Structure and Mission .....	10
FY 2021 Goals and Objectives .....	13
Performance Highlights .....	14
Ongoing Challenges .....	19
Financial Highlights .....	23
Analysis of Systems, Controls, and Legal Compliance.....	25
 <b>Section 2: Performance Information .....</b>	<b>30</b>
FY 2021 Goals, Objectives, and Results.....	31
<b>Impact Objectives</b>	
Impact Objective 1: <i>Produce and curate journalism and other content of exceptional value that informs and engages audiences and expands the media marketplace.....</i>	34
Impact Objective 2: <i>Reach and engage audiences in key strategic areas including the information-denied, underserved and targets of disinformation and extremist rhetoric.....</i>	56
Impact Objective 3: <i>Overcome censorship to connect audiences in closed societies .....</i>	78
Impact Objective 4: <i>Optimize program delivery by market and expand engagement on digital platforms.....</i>	85
Impact Objective 5: <i>Serve as authoritative source of information on U.S. news, policy, and society .....</i>	99
Impact Objective 6: <i>Serve as a surrogate news operation, delivering information otherwise not available in local markets .....</i>	108
Impact Objective 7: <i>Engage local media and empower citizen information gathering and exchange .....</i>	116



## Agility Objectives

Agility Objective 1: <i>Run USAGM as a nimble, resilient, cost-effective, and state-of-the-art media enterprise</i> .....	130
Agility Objective 2: <i>Enhance strategic cooperation among USAGM networks and with support elements</i> .....	146
Agility Objective 3: <i>Enable greater impact and accountability through rigorous assessment and evaluation</i> .....	154
Agility Objective 4: <i>Foster employee engagement, development, and productivity</i> .....	160
Verification and Validation of Performance Measures .....	165
Evidence Building .....	167

## Section 3: Financial Information ..... 170

Message from the Chief Financial Officer .....	171
Independent Auditor's Report .....	172
Response to the Audit .....	183
Balance Sheet .....	185
Statement of Net Cost .....	186
Statement of Changes in Net Position .....	187
Statement of Budgetary Resources .....	188
Notes to Principal Financial Statements .....	189
Required Supplementary Information .....	216

## Section 4: Other Information ..... 217

Inspector General's Statement on FY 2021	
Management and Performance Challenges .....	218
Agency Response to the Management and Performance Challenges .....	224
Summary of Financial Statement Audit and Management Assurances .....	227
Reporting on Payment Integrity.....	229
Report on Grants Oversight & New Efficiency (GONE) Act Requirements .....	230

# Introduction

## PURPOSE OF THE PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

The FY 2021 PAR provides performance and financial information for USAGM. This integrated presentation of the agency's program performance, financial accountability, and managerial effectiveness is intended to assist Congress, the President, and the public in assessing USAGM's performance relative to its mission and stewardship of the resources entrusted to it.

This report satisfies the reporting requirements of the following legislation:

- Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982 (FMFIA)
- Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA)
- Government Management Reform Act of 1994 (GMRA)
- Reports Consolidation Act of 2000
- Accountability of Tax Dollars Act of 2002
- Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRMA)
- Grants Oversight and New Efficiency Act of 2016 (GONE)
- The Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019 (PIIA)

## STRUCTURE OF THE PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

The report includes the following sections:

### **Management's Discussion and Analysis (MD&A)**

The MD&A is an overview of USAGM, its organizational structure, and its mission. It includes a summary of the agency's program highlights and accomplishments for FY 2021 and USAGM's management and performance challenges. The MD&A also includes the results of the agency's FY 2021 FMFIA internal control review and a section on management assurances.



**Performance Information**

The performance section presents annual program performance information as required by GPRA and GPRMA, and describes the agency's progress in meeting its operational strategic goals. The outcome of the FY 2021 goals and objectives is presented as well as a summary explanation of the verification and validation of performance measures used in the report.

**Financial Information**

The financial section contains USAGM's financial statements for the federal entities and the related Independent Auditor's Report. In this section, USAGM has prepared and presented all four statements as required by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-136, Financial Reporting Requirements.

**Other Information**

This section contains the Inspector General's statement on management and performance challenges along with USAGM's response. It also contains a summary of the financial statement audit, management assurances, payment integrity, and grants program information.

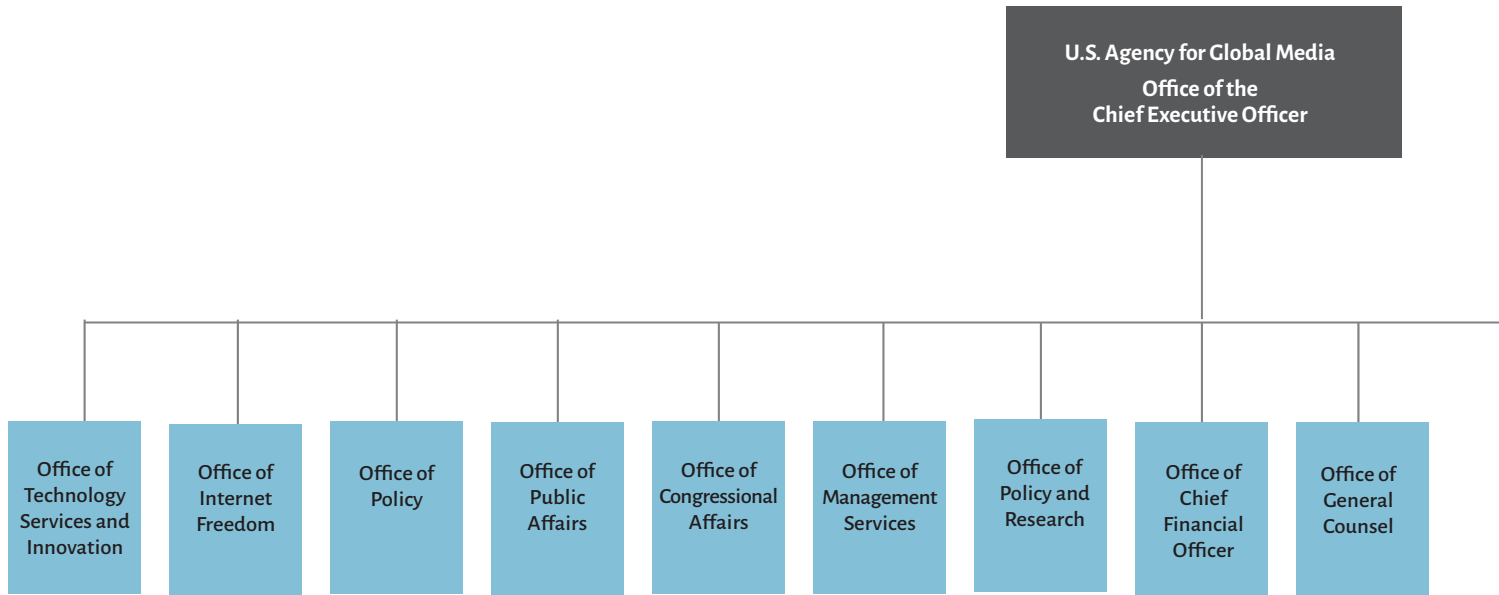
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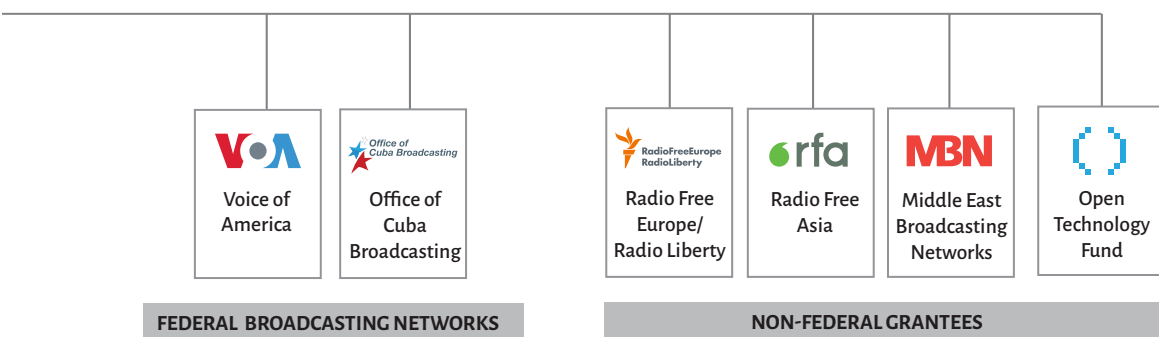
### Management's Discussion and Analysis

Organizational Structure and Mission .....	10
FY 2021 Goals and Objectives .....	13
Performance Highlights .....	14
Ongoing Challenges .....	19
Financial Highlights .....	23
Analysis of Systems, Controls, and Legal Compliance .....	25



## USAGM ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE





## USAGM MISSION

To inform, engage, and connect people around the world  
in support of freedom and democracy.

USAGM informs, engages, and connects people around the world in support of freedom and democracy through its international media programs. Around the world, an estimated 394 million people consume USAGM programming in a typical week via radio, television, and the internet. All USAGM broadcast services must adhere to the standards and principles of the International Broadcasting Act of 1994, as amended, and support the USAGM mission.

# USAGM Organization

USAGM, originally the Broadcasting Board of Governors, became an independent federal entity on October 1, 1999 as a result of the 1998 Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act (Public Law 105-277). USAGM was created to administer civilian international media funded by the U.S. Government in accordance with the U.S. International Broadcasting Act of 1994, as amended. The FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act made several significant reforms to the agency's management structure. Primarily, the act authorized the position of a Presidentially-nominated, Senate-confirmed Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Under the new statutory structure, the CEO (or Acting CEO) serves as agency head, assuming all leadership, management, and operational authorities.

USAGM is comprised of two federal entities – the Voice of America (VOA) and the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB), which broadcasts under the Martí brand – and four grantees wholly funded and overseen by USAGM – Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Radio Free Asia (RFA), the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN), and the Open Technology Fund (OTF).

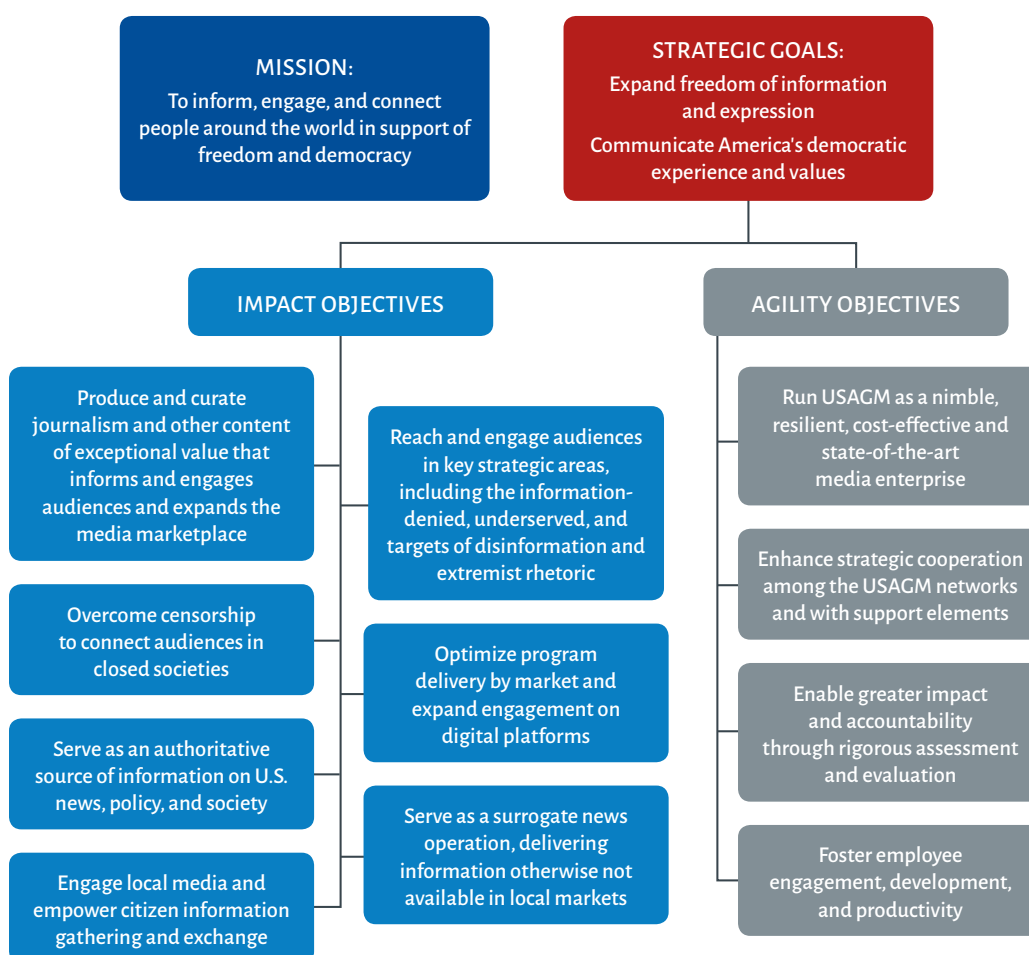
USAGM networks all share the same mission, but were created by the U.S. Congress to fulfill different roles in their respective markets. Telling America's story and explaining U.S. foreign policy are a significant part of USAGM's mandate. To that end, VOA provides comprehensive regional and world news to their local audiences, while also covering the United States in all its complexity, so that people in countries with at-risk systems might find inspiration in the U.S. model. RFE/RL, RFA, and OCB act as surrogate broadcasters, providing access to professional and fact-based regional and local news in countries subject to press restrictions. MBN serves as a hybrid of the two models, providing accurate and comprehensive news about the region and the United States. OTF works to advance internet freedom worldwide, enabling people to exercise their fundamental human rights online without fear of repressive censorship or surveillance.

# FY 2021 Goals and Objectives

Two overarching strategic goals are set forth in USAGM's Strategic Plan 2018-2022:

- **Expand freedom of information and expression**
- **Communicate America's democratic experience and values**

In support of these goals, the Strategic Plan sets out seven Impact Objectives and four Agility Objectives:

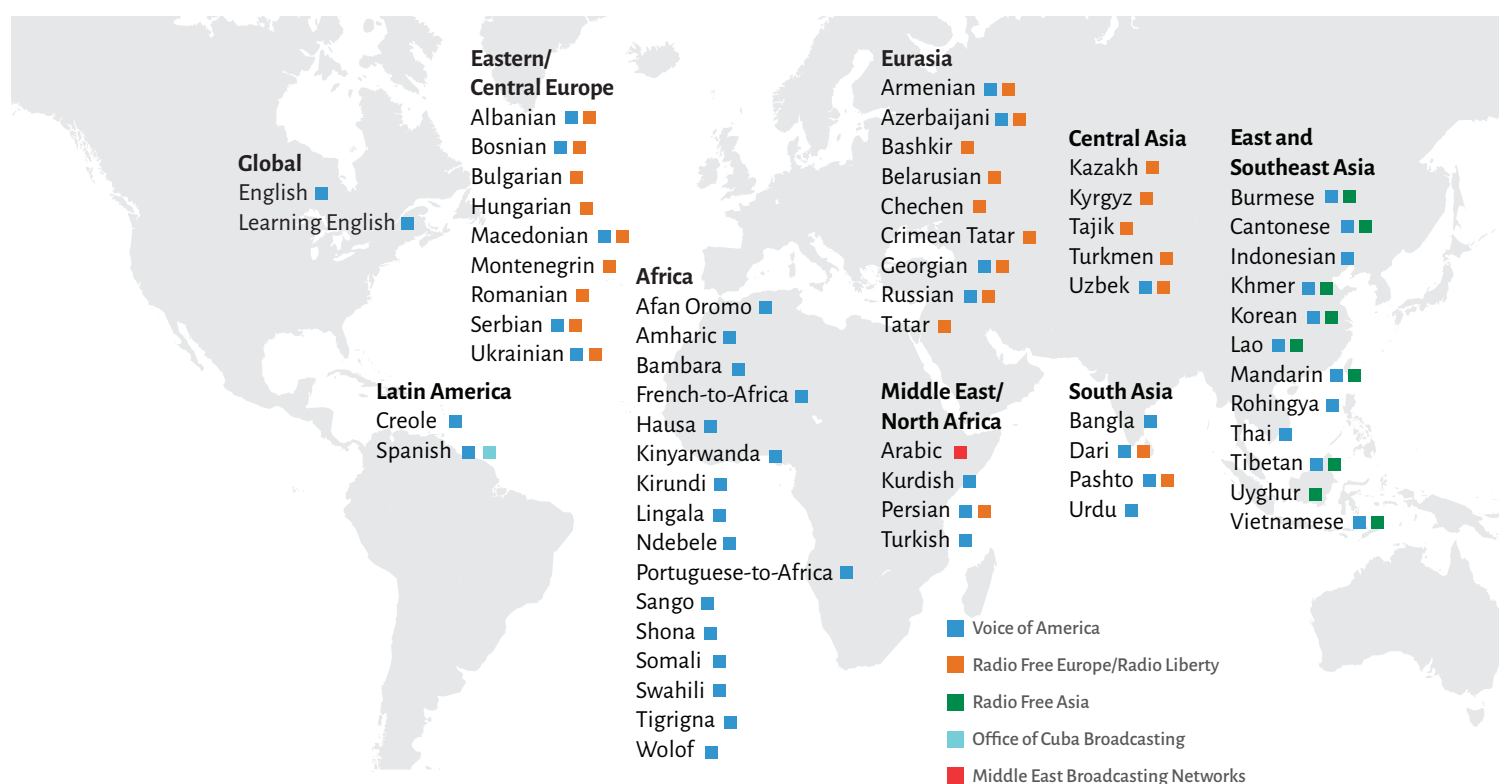


The agency set performance goals supporting each of the Impact and Agility Objectives. Highlights of USAGM's performance in FY 2021 are presented on the following pages. Full performance results are presented in Section Two.

# Performance Highlights

Over the past year, USAGM has effectively distributed breaking news, in-depth reporting, and reasoned analysis via traditional- and new-media platforms, illustrating that international media is an effective U.S. instrument for providing information to people around the world who are denied it by their own governments and media.

**Around the world, 394 million people consume USAGM programming in a typical week in 62 languages.**



## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN FY 2021

### Voice of America

Across its 47 language services, VOA provided comprehensive reporting on the 2020 U.S. elections, closely following the campaigns, live streaming the latest updates on the night of the election, and covering their aftermath. For example, VOA Spanish produced more than 400 live and pre-recorded reports on and around Election Day from locations including Washington, D.C., Miami, Houston, Wilmington, and Los Angeles, while VOA Africa Division featured a multimedia series profiling diaspora candidates elected to state legislatures across the country. Over 2.5 million viewers engaged with VOA Russian's election-related programming on the web, social media, and the Current Time channel, that featured interviews with newsmakers, experts and voters, and live, simultaneously translated speeches and debates, as well as live coverage on and around Election Day. Driven in part by strong election coverage, VOA Mandarin had over 101 million video views across their site and social platforms in FY 2021. On their website, individual articles and multimedia pieces were consumed more than 97 million times in the same period.

### Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

RFE/RL continues to face incredible operational and distribution challenges in Russia. Nevertheless, the network continued to provide objective and comprehensive reporting on major issues such as growing political oppression, the parliamentary and local elections, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic still raging across the country. RFE/RL's Russian Service and Current Time provided live, exclusive coverage of Alexey Navalny's return to Russia and the ensuing protests and unprecedented crackdown. They also featured extensive reporting on the ways in which the Kremlin and the ruling United Russia party worked to eliminate all viable opposition, stifle dissent, and confuse the electorate in advance of the September elections. In total, RFE/RL's online coverage of the January 23 protests across the country garnered more than 20 million views, while their live reporting throughout the election weekend received more than 4 million views across digital platforms.

## Radio Free Asia

RFA provided a platform for Burmese citizens to understand changing conditions on the ground following the military coup. Even before the coup, RFA Burmese had seen its audience in the country grow four-fold in just over two years from 6.2 percent in 2018 to 24.9 percent in 2020. After the popular protests and the bloody crackdown following the February 1 coup, RFA reporters continued to operate, documenting the protest movement and military repression despite the great personal risks. Between February and September 2021, the RFA Burmese website saw nearly 50 million visits and over 10 million article views, while on Facebook it exceeded one billion video views and 250 million interactions. The international media widely used RFA's coverage of street protests and interviews with military defectors, as in the example of its exclusive footage of police beating ambulance workers with rifle butts on March 3 that was picked up by ABC News, Reuters, and the Associated Press. In June, VOA teamed up with RFA to launch a 24/7 Burmese TV channel – “Ludu Meitswe” (“Friend of the People”) – featuring daily and weekly news and analytical shows, in-depth investigations, as well as Learning English content.

## Middle East Broadcasting Networks

MBN provided in-depth coverage of sensitive issues that is unique in the region. One of these issues is human rights that MBN covered throughout its broadcast and digital platforms as well as in dedicated programs such as Sawa Iraq's *Bikarama* (With Dignity) and Alhurra's *Word of Truth*, which provides a platform for moderate intellectuals often banned or marginalized in Arab countries. MBN dedicated significant attention to women's issues through special programs such as *Ta' Al Ta'nith* (“She”) or the new *Chapters* weekly podcast that prioritized women's voices, highlighted advances in women's political participation and representation, and examined taboo topics such as child adoption and female genital mutilation. The network also paid special attention to reporting on violence against women, whether perpetrated in their homes, where many were stuck in close quarters with their abusers because of the pandemic. MBN also focused on human rights abuses in conflict situations as in Syria and Yemen, or by human traffickers as people from the region tried to flee conflict and extreme poverty. MBN's coverage put these issues in the limelight, helping raise general awareness and highlighting solutions from around the region and the world.

### Office of Cuba Broadcasting

OCB's Radio and Televisión Martí provided critical coverage of the massive anti-government protests throughout Cuba in July 2021, helping audiences stay informed about the rapid developments and sort fact from fiction amidst government propaganda. The Martí went live shortly after the demonstrations began and provided continuous multi-media coverage across all platforms, including reports from independent journalists on the island, curated live Facebook feeds from the protests, expert analyses, and reactions from the Cuban diaspora and U.S. government officials. Accompanying the content on Martí's website and social media platforms, Radio Martí continued medium wave (MW) and surged shortwave (SW) broadcasts to the island. This multi-platform approach enabled audience access despite rolling internet blockages imposed by the government. USAGM affiliates across Latin America sought out Martí reporting on the protests, with some carrying its coverage on air or interviewing Martí journalists about the latest developments, helping counter Cuban and other governments' false narratives about the protests across the region.

### Open Technology Fund

In FY 2021, OTF supported over 30 new projects advancing the free and open Internet and had dozens more receiving ongoing support. These projects support the research, development, implementation, and maintenance of technologies and tools that advance Internet freedom, including support for circumvention and privacy/security-enhancing technologies that are used by over 2 billion people worldwide. Following the restoration of its funding in February 2021, OTF opened a revitalized Rapid Response Fund. Immediately providing assistance with secure hosting, security audits, and website sanitation to civil society organizations as well as direct funding for emergency digital security efforts supporting journalists, human rights defenders, and activists in places like Burma. OTF also supported its sixth class of fellows from the Information Controls Fellowship Program (ICFP). The fellows completed work on a wide range of projects including applied research on information control developments and advancing circumvention and anonymity techniques.



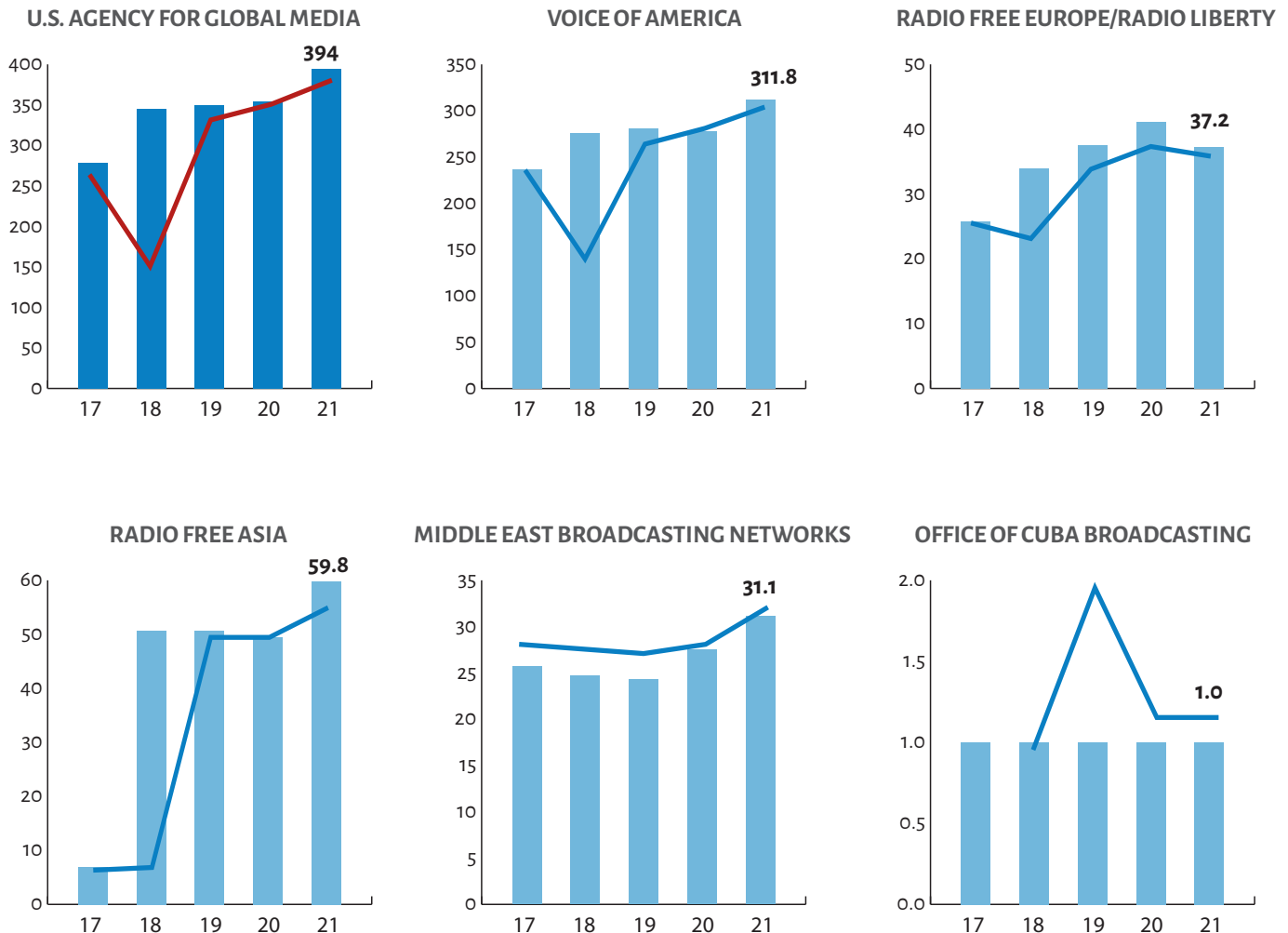
## USAGM WEEKLY AUDIENCE CHARTS

A key measure of USAGM’s success is its weekly audience. These charts present weekly audience for USAGM networks—individuals who have consumed news and information in the past seven days—from FY 2017 to FY 2021, along with the targets set by the agency. Impact cannot be reduced to a single quantitative factor and USAGM has implemented an Impact Model, supported by a robust set of performance indicators to gauge success. All of the performance indicators for USAGM Impact Objectives come from the Impact Model, which is described under “Evidence Building” in Section 2 of this document.

### USAGM Weekly Audience Charts

All audience numbers are in millions.

Targets indicated as red or blue line. FY 2021 targets are from the FY 2022 Congressional Budget Request.



# Ongoing Challenges

## MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

Major factors shaping the global political and security context for USAGM activities include barriers to freedom of information, the changing nature of communications, sophisticated disinformation operations by state and non-state actors, and threats to security from extremism and instability. Extremist rhetoric and incitement to violence directly threaten U.S. national security interests in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, and elsewhere, while the adroit adoption of digital and social media by actors around the world, including the Islamic State and others, threatens core U.S. values of freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights and religious freedom. Meanwhile, sophisticated state propaganda sponsored by Russia, China, and other authoritarian regimes propagates false narratives and disinformation, confusing audiences in order to subvert democratic ideals and sow doubt in American ideas and ideals. The credible, factual, and locally-relevant journalism of the USAGM networks challenges these lies and half-truths in order to support democratic values, open debate, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

A key challenge for USAGM is to deliver programming to audiences via the media and the formats they prefer, despite the instabilities and evolution of various media markets. USAGM has continued its migration away from shortwave and medium wave radio to formats and platforms that audiences increasingly use, including FM radio, television, and digital platforms. For example, in FY 2021, VOA discontinued its SW and MW radio transmissions in Bangla, focusing instead on content delivery via affiliates as well as utilizing the growing opportunities afforded by digital platforms such as social media and the VOA mobile app. Similarly, OCB eliminated its traditional delivery of over-the-air television to audiences in Cuba, instead leveraging the rapidly growing digital access in the country to transition to its streaming audio visual platform and other available digital media.

To reach audiences, USAGM is constantly working to overcome various forms of censorship. USAGM has been at the forefront of the battle against satellite jamming, working closely with other concerned parties and through international forums. In Afghanistan, following the Taliban takeover, USAGM replaced VOA

Urdu programming from a MW transmitter in Tajikistan with VOA and RFE/RL Afghan radio programming in anticipation that the Taliban might eventually shut down all USAGM FM and MW transmissions in the country.

USAGM responds to threats to democracy and the U.S. national interest worldwide with surges in broadcasting. In FY 2021, during crises and political unrest, as governments attempted to shut down the internet and impose full information blackouts in Cuba, Ethiopia's Tigray region, and Burma, USAGM networks surged their SW and MW radio transmissions and added programming hours to ensure the public has access to the latest news. For Ethiopia and Burma, USAGM also launched direct-to-home satellite TV channels. Furthermore, recognizing the increasingly precarious situation in the Sahel and Mali's importance for security and governance on the African continent, VOA launched a separate Bambara language service, which had originally launched as part of VOA's French to Africa Service, with programming to include a daily morning show, live streaming from Bamako, and greater multimedia content from Bambara-speaking communities in Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast. As protests continued across Iraq and Lebanon, Sawa radio switched its format to all news and information in stations targeting Iraq and the Levant. USAGM networks also provided extensive coverage of, among other news items, the COVID-19 pandemic and related challenges, particularly for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable around the world, continued mass protests and the ensuing crackdown in Belarus and Russia, human rights abuses across the Middle East and Asia, and the ongoing political and humanitarian crises in Central and Latin America.

## AUDIENCES

Within this challenging environment, USAGM has achieved a record weekly audience of 394 million people. USAGM networks are focused on expanding their audiences and increasing their impact by targeting programming and delivery methods to engage key, strategic audiences in priority countries and regions aligned with U.S. interests. Through the Language Service Review process, USAGM language services identify key target audiences and associated impact goals and performance targets.

USAGM's Office of Policy and Research (OPR) made several changes in FY 2021 to improve strategic decision-making and program targeting throughout the agency.

OPR continued to develop its data ecosystem, including back-end planning and preparation for a new enterprise data management system that would consolidate data from a variety of sources and automate data ingest and processing.

OPR has led the development and testing of a new survey questionnaire that will allow data collection to be faster, cheaper, and more reliable. In FY 2021, OPR commissioned cognitive testing of the new instrument in five markets and survey testing in four. With the information gathered through this testing, the research staff finalized a new survey instrument, which is more focused on USAGM's brands and better aligned with how audiences now access content. Moving forward, the agency will continue to test new questions, ensuring that its measurement tools reflect the ways modern audiences adapt to rapidly shifting media landscapes.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

USAGM requires powerful and reliable infrastructure and equipment to fulfill its mission. USAGM customers – audiences and affiliate stations around the world – often have a number of news choices. To ensure these programs engage target audiences, USAGM must find ways to effectively deliver high-quality programs in a format that is preferred by and accessible to the target audience. USAGM must manage a mix of media and technologies from traditional shortwave radio to satellite television, internet, and mobile devices.

The rapidly evolving broadcast information technology market requires USAGM to diversify and invest in its broadcast and transmission technologies. Audiences around the world depend on a wide range of platforms, requiring USAGM to maintain a traditional transmission network and invest in new media technology, to support programming efforts, such as news delivery via on-demand video or social media. New infrastructure must be established and maintained along with existing infrastructure, and this maintenance is complicated by the advent of digital technology with shorter lifecycles. Given these constraints, USAGM strives to allocate resources judiciously to address the most critical infrastructure requirements as well as recurring technical infrastructure requirements and one-time projects.

USAGM is aggressively shifting to digital platforms. Efforts include enterprise web and social media engagement tools to measure traffic and engagement on USAGM sites and accounts on key platforms and new encryption and proxy tools to circumvent censorship.

Where broadcast platforms remain essential, USAGM carefully manages its aging infrastructure to maintain a strong presence in critical markets, ensuring signal strength and reliability of broadcasts to these vital areas. USAGM monitors its signals in real time and conducts in-depth analyses to determine the best way to broadcast to a particular region. In FY 2021, USAGM continued repairing the Northern Mariana transmitting station, which was heavily damaged by Typhoon Yutu in 2018, and expanding the agency's broadcast capabilities at the Kuwait Transmitting Station.

## MANAGEMENT

While audience preferences and research dictate the strategies of individual language services across USAGM, the agency must remain flexible and capable of adapting to changes in regional priorities and broadcast strategies. USAGM must continually assess how best to scale and shape operations, including the right mix of language services to meet new challenges while enhancing performance.

Unpredictable global events and changing media consumption habits make it important that the agency continually improve its ability to respond to events with agility and focus. As audience preferences in target broadcast areas have changed, USAGM has transitioned from radio-only broadcasts to multimedia news and information distribution, including television, the internet, and mobile applications. Like surge broadcasts, these changes in distribution availability and audience preferences evolve quickly and require that USAGM be innovative to respond effectively and decisively.

Internally, the quality, competence, and morale of the USAGM workforce is critical to mission achievement. As such, the agency has made the development and motivation of its workforce a key component of its Strategic Plan for meeting future challenges. Consistently low Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) scores and, specifically, issues of employee morale and satisfaction, made apparent in the results of these surveys, are being addressed through comprehensive communications initiatives and integrated intra-agency communications platforms.

# Financial Highlights

The USAGM financial statements are included in the Financial Section of this report.

Preparing these statements allows USAGM to improve financial management and provide accurate and reliable information to Congress, the President, and the taxpayer. USAGM management is responsible for the integrity and objectivity of the financial information presented in the statements.

The financial statements and financial data presented in this report have been prepared from the accounting records of USAGM in conformity with accounting principles in the United States of America and incorporate the application of the standards as prescribed by the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board.

The following is a comparative summary of certain financial information derived from USAGM's Principal Financial Statements.

<b>Financial Highlights (in thousands)</b>	<b>FY 2021</b>	<b>FY 2020</b>
At End of the Year:		
<b>Condensed Balance Sheet Data:</b>		
Fund Balance with Treasury	\$ 253,758	\$ 250,954
Cash and Other Monetary Assets	3	3
Accounts Receivable	241	313
Property, Plant and Equipment	46,651	58,705
Advances to Surrogate Broadcasters and Internet Freedom	95,000	85,500
Other	569	697
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 396,222</b>	<b>\$ 396,172</b>
Accounts Payable and Other	\$ 35,198	\$ 30,017
Retirement and Payroll	50,586	49,035
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 85,784</b>	<b>\$ 79,052</b>
Unexpended Appropriations	\$ 292,620	\$ 284,723
Cumulative Results of Operations	17,818	32,397
<b>Total Net Position</b>	<b>310,438</b>	<b>317,120</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Position</b>	<b>\$ 396,222</b>	<b>\$ 396,172</b>
For the Year:		
<b>Condensed Statement of Net Cost Data:</b>		
Total Cost	\$ 823,883	\$ 824,858
Total Earned Revenue	(4,416)	(4,275)
<b>Total Net Cost of Operations</b>	<b>\$ 819,467</b>	<b>\$ 820,583</b>

The independent accounting firm, Kearney & Company, conducted our FY 2021 financial statement audit and issued an unmodified opinion on our Financial Statements.

## LIMITATIONS OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The principal financial statements are prepared to report the financial position, financial condition, and results of operations of USAGM, pursuant to the requirements of 31 U.S.C. 3515 (b). The statements are prepared from USAGM's books and records in accordance with U.S. generally-accepted accounting principles (GAAP) for Federal entities and the formats prescribed by the Office of Management and Budget. Reports used to monitor and control budgetary resources are prepared from the same books and records. The financial statements should be read with the realization that they are for a component of the U.S. Government.

# Analysis of Systems, Controls, and Legal Compliance

## FEDERAL MANAGERS' FINANCIAL INTEGRITY ACT

The Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA) of 1982 (Public Law 97-255) is designed to provide reasonable assurance that agencies institute management accountability and internal controls that support five objectives:

- Programs achieve their strategic objectives,
- Resources are effectively used consistent with the Agency's mission,
- Programs and resources are properly safeguarded against waste, fraud, and mismanagement,
- Information is reliable and timely to support decision making, and
- Agency complies with applicable laws and regulations.

OMB Circular A-123, *Management's Responsibility for Enterprise Risk Management and Internal Control* provides implementation guidance to Federal managers on improving the accountability and effectiveness of Federal programs and operations by identifying and managing risks, establishing requirements to assess, correct, and report on the effectiveness of internal controls. OMB Circular A-123 implements the FMFIA and GAO's *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* (Green Book) requirements.

For compliance with the FMFIA of 1982 and OMB Circular A-123 the Agency head of USAGM provides the annual assurance statement on the status of:

- Effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting
- Effectiveness of internal control over operations
- Conformance with federal financial management system requirements
- Any material weakness found in the financial statements, which are derived from independent audits, Government Accountability Office (GAO), Office of the Inspector General (OIG) reviews, inspections or audits, and self-assessments conducted by USAGM's management



In compliance with FMFIA Section 4, 3512(d) (2) (B) Section 4-31 U.S.C. 3512(d) (2) (B), Senior Management prepares an annual statement on the agency's accounting systems conformity to the principles, standards, and related requirements prescribed by the Comptroller General. Based on this requirement, USAGM is required to comply with the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA).

During FY 2021, USAGM has made progress implementing an agency information security and risk management program. The recent OIG FY 2021 FISMA audit report, reflects the agency's improvements across several FISMA domains, as well as the agency's improved overall information security program maturity level to level 3, "consistently implemented." The OIG also closed (17) recommendations, which has now eliminated our backlog of legacy prior year recommendations. The report documents how, over the past year, USAGM has made remarkable improvements in information security despite challenges the COVID-19 pandemic presented to the agency's IT operations. Notable accomplishments include:

- Deployment of tools and processes to improve our Information Security Continuous Monitoring Program;
- Enactment of USAGM Multi-factor Authentication solutions;
- Implementation of established policies and procedures – specifically within the Risk Management, Security Training, and Incident Response domains, in which USAGM achieved a maturity rating of "Managed and Measurable;"
- Continued implementation of the agency's Enterprise Risk Management framework and Information Security Risk Management strategy; and
- Development of a Supply Chain Risk Management Strategy, Policy, and Program Plan.

The Agency's management controls program is designed to ensure compliance with the goals, objectives, and requirements of the FMFIA and various Federal laws and regulations. USAGM employs an integrated process to perform the work necessary to meet the requirements of OMB Circular A-123's Appendix A and Appendix C (regarding Payment Integrity), the FMFIA, and the GAO's Green Book. During FY 2021 USAGM identified, assessed and analyzed Agency-wide risks in accordance with OMB Circular A-123. The FY 2021 risk profile prioritized

significant risks to the achievement of USAGM's objectives and mission. The Agency has documented and is currently implementing appropriate risk response mitigation strategies to these enterprise risks. Consistent with the ERM process, management continuously monitors the progress and effectiveness of these mitigation strategies. Management also considers results of OIG and GAO audit reports, the annual financial statement audit, OMB Circular A-123 Appendix A internal controls over reporting program assessments, and other relevant information.

## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND REPORTING INTERNAL CONTROL REVIEW**

Each year, USAGM receives an Independent Audit Report containing an opinion on our financial statements, a report on internal control over financial reporting, and a report on compliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements. In addition to safeguarding resources and complying with laws and regulations, USAGM strives to fairly and accurately present financial reports that have a material effect on spending, budgetary, or other financial decisions.

## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS STRATEGIES**

USAGM currently uses CGI's proprietary Momentum Financials and Acquisitions version 7.6.0 as their financial system of record. The Integrated Award Environment (IAE) initiative managed by GSA announced that they will retire the use of Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number as the official identifier for doing business with the federal government and introduce a new Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), generated in the System for Award Management (SAM). The IAE directed federal agencies to finalize their transition to using the SAM-generated UEI by April 2022. During FY 2021, USAGM initiated an upgrade to version 7.9 which will support the new UEI and will allow increased functionality and compliance with a variety of mandated requirements.

In FY 2021 USAGM continued the work began in FY 2020 to finalize requirements for conversion to a new Human Resource system to interface with the existing Defense Civilian Payroll System (DCPS). The current Interface will be unsupported in FY 2022 by the payroll processing system. USAGM continues to

assess and automate processes to gain processing efficiencies and strengthen internal controls.

#### **PAYMENT INTEGRITY PROGRAM**

USAGM is dedicated to continuing to strengthen its improper payments program to ensure payments are valid and processed correctly. The Program utilizes an experienced and trained staff, a financial management system that is designed with control functions to mitigate risk, and an analysis process to review transactions and procedures.

USAGM performs assessments and procedures to comply with the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019, OMB Circular A-123 Appendix C and OMB Memorandum updates.

More information on USAGM's activities safeguarding against improper payments can be found in Section Four.

# FY 2021 Statement of Assurance



U.S. AGENCY FOR  
GLOBAL MEDIA

330 Independence Avenue SW | Washington, DC 20237 | usagm.gov

## FY 2021 STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

The U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal control to meet the objectives of Sections 2 and 4 of the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act. USAGM conducted its assessment of risk and internal control in accordance with OMB Circular No. A-123, *Management's Responsibility for Enterprise Risk Management and Internal Control*. Based on the results of the assessment, the agency can provide reasonable assurance that internal controls over operations, reporting and compliance were operating effectively as of September 30, 2021.

For FY 2021, USAGM reported one material weakness condition based on concurrence with the independent financial audit report. During FY 2017 through FY 2021, USAGM has made significant progress to address invalid unliquidated obligations (ULOs) by focusing on the larger dollar value obligations and making ULO accounting adjustments where necessary. However, USAGM must strengthen its process for the timely identification and close-out of obligations that are no longer valid, including lower dollar value amounts, as well as effectively communicate its risk-based approach to the agency's auditors to better inform their methodology in the future.

During FY 2021, USAGM senior leadership focused attention and resources on continuing progress in improving grants oversight. USAGM recently awarded a contract to assist the agency improve grantee oversight and has begun working with the team of subject matter experts to assess opportunities for improvement.

USAGM has made remarkable improvements in information security despite challenges the COVID-19 pandemic presented to the agency's IT operations. The FY 2021 FISMA audit report reflects the agency's improvements across several FISMA domains, as well as the agency's improved overall information security program maturity level to level 3, "consistently implemented."

By maintaining our dedicated efforts, USAGM leadership is confident that, in collaboration with the Office of Inspector General, we will continue to improve our internal control posture.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keluo Chao'.

Kelu Chao  
Acting Chief Executive Officer



## Section 2: Performance Information

FY 2021 Goals, Objectives, and Results.....	31
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### Impact Objectives

Impact Objective 1: <i>Produce and curate journalism and other content of exceptional value that informs and engages audiences and expands the media marketplace .....</i>	34
Impact Objective 2: <i>Reach and engage audiences in key strategic areas including the information-denied, underserved and targets of disinformation and extremist rhetoric.....</i>	56
Impact Objective 3: <i>Overcome censorship to connect audiences in closed societies.....</i>	78
Impact Objective 4: <i>Optimize program delivery by market and expand engagement on digital platforms.....</i>	85
Impact Objective 5: <i>Serve as authoritative source of information on U.S. news, policy and society.....</i>	99
Impact Objective 6: <i>Serve as a surrogate news operation, delivering information otherwise not available in local markets..</i>	108
Impact Objective 7: <i>Engage local media and empower citizen information gathering and exchange.....</i>	116

### Agility Objectives

Agility Objective 1: <i>Run USAGM as a nimble, resilient, cost-effective and state-of-the-art media enterprise .....</i>	130
Agility Objective 2: <i>Enhance strategic cooperation among USAGM networks and with support elements.....</i>	146
Agility Objective 3: <i>Enable greater impact and accountability through rigorous assessment and evaluation.....</i>	154
Agility Objective 4: <i>Foster employee engagement, development and productivity .....</i>	160

Verification and Validation of Performance Measures.....	165
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Evidence Building .....	167
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# FY 2021 Goals, Objectives, and Results

## SUMMARY OF THE 2018-2022 USAGM STRATEGIC PLAN

USAGM's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan continues an ambitious roadmap to refine and expand the reach and impact of U.S. international media in support of the U.S. national interest. The plan informs USAGM budget requests and supports the integration of performance, budget planning, and agency management.

The mission of USAGM remains to inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy.

To better fulfill that mission, the Strategic Plan sets forth two overarching strategic goals:

- Expand freedom of information and expression
- Communicate America's democratic experience and values

Freedom of the press and freedom of expression are essential to democracy, and promotion of them supports the U.S. national interest through stability, peace, alliances, and trade. Communicating America's democratic experience and values serves the same purpose. In covering the United States, USAGM networks open a live window onto democracy in action.

USAGM's two strategic goals are supported by seven Impact Objectives and four Agility Objectives, each of which has supporting performance goals. All of the performance indicators supporting the Impact Objectives come from the USAGM Impact Model.

## PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

### Mission:

To inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy

### Strategic Goals:

Expand freedom of information and expression  
Communicate America's democratic experience and values

### Objectives:

Impact Objectives

Agility Objectives  
(see page 129)

USAGM's Strategic Goals are supported by Impact Objectives, which focus on performance on the mission, and Agility Objectives, which focus on the management of the agency.

Each objective is broken down into measurable performance goals. USAGM sets targets for these goals annually. Following is the five-year historical data for each performance goal, an explanation of the indicator and how it is measured, and a detailed analysis of the results.

### IMPACT OBJECTIVES:

1	Produce and curate journalism and other content of exceptional value that informs and engages audiences and expands the media marketplace	IMPACT OBJECTIVE 1	34
		Audiences by platform and region	35
		PERFORMANCE GOALS:	
		1.1 Reach significant audiences	37
		1.2 Provide programming that audiences find trustworthy	41
2	Reach and engage audiences in key strategic areas, including the information-denied, underserved, and targets of disinformation and extremist rhetoric	Citations of USAGM reporting in influential news outlets	44
		1.3 Provide programming that increases audiences' understanding of current events	48
		Producing or curating content on issues important to audiences	50
		1.4 Provide programming that is influential with audiences	52
		Original investigative reporting	54
		IMPACT OBJECTIVE 2	56
		PERFORMANCE GOALS:	
		2.1 Achieve significant audience reach in environments subject to extremist rhetoric and violence	59
		Programming responding to crisis situations	60
		Examples of USAGM impact in environments subject to extremism	64
		2.2 Reach audiences in information-denied environments	66
		Examples of USAGM impact in information-denied environments	68
		News pick-ups from inside closed regimes	70
		2.3 Reach audiences in environments targeted by state-sponsored disinformation campaigns	72
		Examples of USAGM impact in environments targeted by state-sponsored disinformation campaigns	74
		Programming targeting groups underrepresented in USAGM audiences	76

3	Overcome censorship to connect to audiences in closed societies.	IMPACT OBJECTIVE 3	78
		PERFORMANCE GOALS:	
		3.1 Increase usage of internet freedom products	79
		Development of new technologies and activities to counter internet censorship and blocking	81
		Education about and promotion of circumvention and digital security technologies	83
4	Optimize program delivery by market and expand engagement on digital platforms	IMPACT OBJECTIVE 4	85
		PERFORMANCE GOALS:	
		4.1 Increase web traffic	87
		4.2 Increase audience interaction via social media	89
		4.3 Build strong affiliate relationships	93
		Shifting platforms to respond to changing audience preferences	95
		Using alternative, creative ways to deliver content	97
5	Serve as an authoritative source of information on U.S. news, policy, and society	IMPACT OBJECTIVE 5	99
		PERFORMANCE GOALS:	
		5.1 Provide programming that increases audiences' understanding of the United States	100
		5.2 Provide exceptional news and information	103
		Successful deployment of the U.S. bureau model	104
		Exceptional and unique coverage of important U.S. news stories	106
6	Serve as a surrogate news operation, delivering information otherwise not available in local markets	IMPACT OBJECTIVE 6	108
		PERFORMANCE GOALS:	
		6.1 Provide programming that increases audiences' understanding of current events in target countries	110
		Coverage of important local news stories that other media are not covering	112
		6.2 Provide exceptional news and information	114
7	Engage local media and empower citizen information gathering and exchange	IMPACT OBJECTIVE 7	116
		PERFORMANCE GOALS:	
		7.1 Increase engagement with local media outlets	118
		Substantive engagement with key local media affiliates	120
		7.2 Increase sharing of USAGM programming	122
		Citizen journalism and user-generated content	124
		USAGM-facilitated dialogue across religious, national and ethnic divides	126



# Impact Objective 1:

## Produce and curate journalism and other content of exceptional value that informs and engages audiences and expands the media marketplace

Journalism is the daily work of USAGM networks, and producing fact-based, verifiable news and information must be preeminent in agency strategy. To have impact, USAGM journalism must reach audiences, meet their interests along the breadth of subjects that matter to their lives and, at the same time, add value in expanding the media marketplace. The aim of USAGM networks is not to strictly follow the 24-hour news cycle, but rather to produce original stories, investigative reporting, in-depth analysis, and a unique cross-cultural perspective that helps audiences become more sophisticated consumers of news and media.

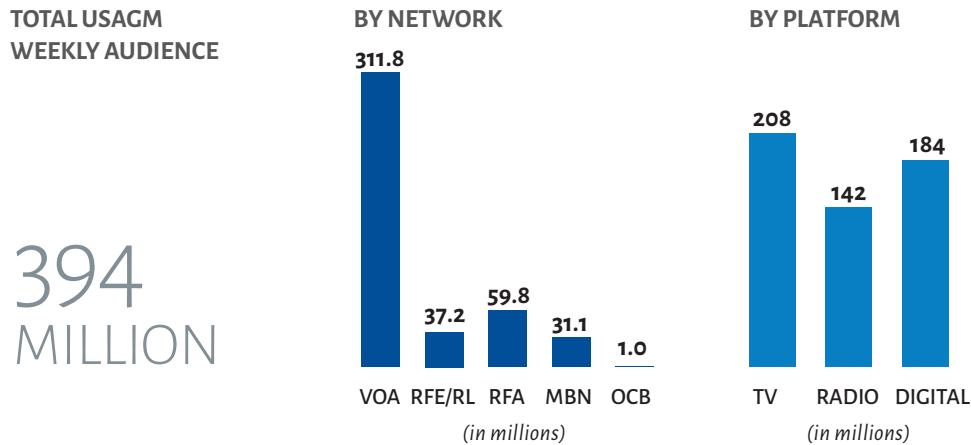
USAGM will:

- As required by statute, provide news and other programming that is accurate, objective, and comprehensive and in accordance with the highest professional standards of journalism.
- Produce news and information, consistent with audience preferences and mission requirements that are not addressed adequately by media in the target area (e.g., human rights and good governance).
- Offer non-news content that research, web analytics, and audience and affiliate feedback show is of vital interest to audiences (e.g., health, science, and technology).
- Produce enterprise reporting through deep and lasting exploration of critical issues in the countries USAGM targets.
- Curate content from and co-create content with reputable partners, as appropriate, that is consistent with broadcasting standards and editorial guidelines.

# Impact Performance Goal Overview

## 1.1

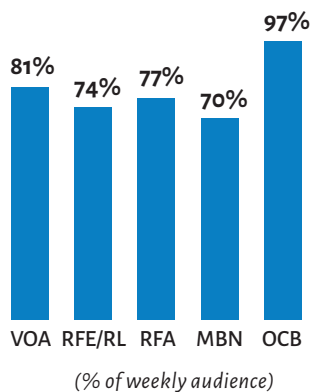
### Reach significant audiences



Note: Total USAGM audience is unduplicated, meaning an individual audience member is counted once, regardless of how many platforms or networks they use. Therefore, the total USAGM audience is not equal to the sum of audience by network or by platform.

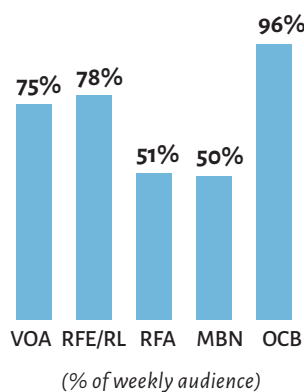
## 1.2

### Provide programming that audiences find trustworthy



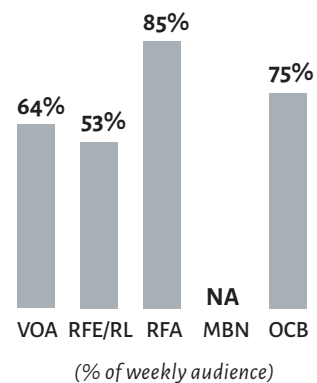
## 1.3

### Provide programming that increases audiences' perceptions of their understanding of current events

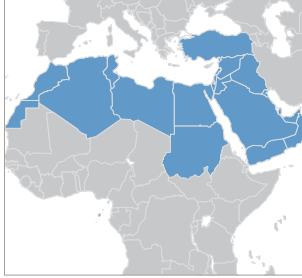


## 1.4

### Provide programming that is influential with audiences



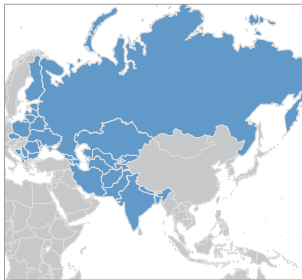
## Audience by Region:



### MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

42.9 MILLION

Data from Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey, UAE, Yemen. Reflects audiences for MBN and VOA.



### NEAR EAST, SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA, EURASIA

88.4 MILLION

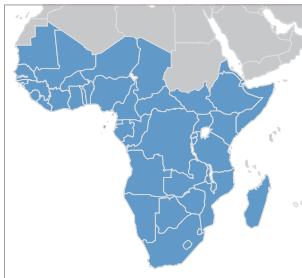
Data from Afghanistan, Albania, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Crimea, Estonia, Georgia, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, Nagorno-Karabakh, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan. Reflects audiences for RFE/RL and VOA.



### EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

135.4 MILLION

Data from Burma, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Laos, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam. Reflects audiences for RFA and VOA.



### SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

68.7 MILLION

Data from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe. Reflects audiences for VOA.



### LATIN AMERICA

58.4 MILLION

Data from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela. Reflects audiences for OCB and VOA.

## IMPACT OBJECTIVE 1

### Impact Performance Goal 1.1: Reach significant audiences

Measured Weekly Audience (in millions)	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
USAGM	278	345	350	354	380	394
VOA	236.8	275.2	280.9	278.0	305.0	311.8
RFE/RL <sup>1</sup>	25.8	33.9	38.1	41.1	36.2	37.2
RFA	6.9	50.7	50.7	49.5	55.0	59.8
MBN	25.7	24.7	24.3	27.5	32.0	31.1
OCB	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.0

<sup>1</sup> The RFE/RL weekly audience figure for FY 2019 was incorrectly reported as 37.6 million in the FY 2019 PAR and FY 2021 Congressional Budget Justification, due to a calculation error in the Afghanistan audience. It has been corrected here to 38.1 million.

#### Notes:

- FY 2021 targets are from the FY 2022 Congressional Budget Request.
- Audience estimates do not include data for Eritrea, North Korea, Syria, or Tibetan and Uyghur regions of China, because political risk has made it impossible to carry out representative surveys in the target regions. Restricted areas represent a significant portion of the countries and regions targeted by RFA language services. In addition, there are other countries and regions with small populations that have not been surveyed due to limited resources, including Oman and the Russian regions served by RFE/RL's North Caucasus and Tatar-Bashkir language services.

## IMPACT INDICATOR:

### Measured Weekly Audiences

This indicator comes from national surveys measuring the number of people in target areas listening to, reading, or viewing USAGM programming or online content in the past week. The agency's method of measuring audience reach is based on nationally-representative surveys conducted periodically to capture a "snapshot" of media consumption during one point in time. In contrast to ratings, which track viewers via a small device affixed to a television or radio, survey measurement relies on individuals accurately recalling the news and information they have heard, watched, or read. Although research surveys ask respondents to report their consumption for multiple time frames (including up to a year), the Agency reports on a time period of seven days – specifically chosen to limit errors introduced when asking individuals to recall their media consumption further back than one week. Throughout this report, the term "weekly audience" denotes only the respondents who report using USAGM content in the "past seven days" before participating in a survey. Furthermore, the USAGM weekly audience figure represents unduplicated individuals, meaning that regardless of the number of times they consume content, and whether they access that content on multiple platforms or networks, an audience member is counted only once. USAGM does not conduct surveys in every country every year, so audience figures may in some cases reflect weekly audience measures collected from up to five years in the past. This may result in an over- or underestimation of actual audience. Additionally, political volatility in certain markets may prevent the measurement of current audiences for services broadcasting to these areas.

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

### USAGM

**Target: 380 million**

**Actual: 394 million**

With a weekly audience of 394 million, USAGM significantly exceeded its target for FY 2021. This increase is due primarily to the use of short omnibus surveys in more markets to identify audiences that previously had not been measured (e.g., India and the Philippines), as well as track growth in some since last measured (e.g., Turkey, Burma, Vietnam, and Iraq). These gains more than offset audience losses in some countries (e.g., Colombia, Tanzania, Bangladesh, and Iran) and a number of surveys aging out of the audience total (e.g., Burundi and Guatemala). Many surveys originally planned for FY 2020 were delayed until FY 2021 due to coronavirus. As local governments implemented travel restrictions and social distancing, research vendors paused in-person data collection until conditions made it possible to resume face-to-face survey administration or pivoted away from in-person to telephone-based surveys, allowing them to resume work sooner and limit further disruptions related to COVID restrictions.

### VOA

**Target: 305.0 million**

**Actual: 311.8 million**

VOA exceeded its FY 2021 target by just over 2 percent, adding 33.8 million weekly users to its global count and reaching a weekly audience of 311.8 million. Measurable increases were found in Turkey, Vietnam, and Burma, among several other markets. The majority of the gain is a result of conducting short surveys in many more markets than in 2020, several of which had long timed out of the global count. For example, 29 million weekly users of VOA in English, Tibetan, and/or Urdu were measured in India, more than a decade after VOA had surveyed the audience of the now closed Hindi service. These newly measured audiences more than offset losses measured in markets such as Colombia, Tanzania, and Bangladesh, and the timing out of 11 surveys, including Burundi and its large audience of 3.4 million.

### RFE/RL

**Target: 36.2 million**

**Actual: 37.2 million**

With a weekly audience of 37.2 million in FY 2021, RFE/RL exceeded its target of 36.2 million. Compared to FY 2020, its weekly audience fell from 41.1 million. Audience estimates for relaunched digital-only services in Bulgaria and Romania yielded impressive results for both efforts. RFE/RL reaches just over half a million Romanian adults each week and nearly 770,000 Bulgarian adults. The decline in RFE/RL's weekly audience estimate was primarily caused by declines in the

measured audience for RFE/RL in Iran and Ukraine. The elimination of medium wave broadcasting to Iran and standalone TV newscasts contributed to audience losses for RFE/RL's Persian Service known locally as Radio Farda. Weekly audiences for radio and TV programming fell while digital audiences for Radio Farda grew. The most recent audience estimates from Ukraine showed that RFE/RL lost some TV viewers gained in the previous survey while expanding radio and digital audiences as RFE/RL continues to reach 19.1 percent of Ukrainian adults each week. Weekly audiences to RFE/RL in Bosnia-Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia also declined in the latest audience measurements in those countries while usage of RFE/RL in Albania increased. RFE/RL lacks current audience estimates from Azerbaijan as well as regional surveys that measured RFE/RL audiences in the North Caucasus in Russia, the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan since each of these studies are all more than five years old and no are longer included in the audience estimate for RFE/RL. Audiences for a new digital-only service in Hungary have yet to be measured.

<b>RFA</b>	<b>Target: 55.0 million</b>	<b>Actual: 59.8 million</b>
<p>With a weekly audience of 59.8 million, RFA exceeded its target. In early FY 2021, USAGM added survey data from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Burma, Laos, and Vietnam. Projected weekly audiences grew in all those markets, more than tripled from previous audience projections in Hong Kong, Burma, and Vietnam, and more than doubled in Laos. Audience growth was fueled by online and social media growth in all markets as well as urgent news developments in Hong Kong and Burma particularly.</p>		

<b>MBN</b>	<b>Target: 32.0 million</b>	<b>Actual: 31.1 million</b>
<p>MBN missed its ambitious target for FY 2021, although the past week reach is still the highest since 2017. MBN's past week audience in Iraq rose to 13.3 million, up from 10.8 million in 2019. However, in Egypt it declined from 2.7 million in 2016 to 1.4 million in 2021, accounting for much of MBN's below-target audiences. The decline in reach in Egypt is likely attributable to government restrictions that are reducing Egyptians' access to MBN content. For the past few years, Egyptians have not been able to easily access Alhurra online content and have had to use VPN and other circumvention tools to access both Alhurra and El Saha. MBN's past week audience in Algeria declined to 105,672 in 2020 from 666,974 in 2018,</p>		

although this has only a minor impact on total reach. Additionally, past week reach in other Maghreb countries including Morocco and Tunisia remain high; 20.1 percent and 17.4 percent, respectively of adults in those countries have used MBN content in the past week.

## OCB

Target: 1.2 million

Actual: 1.0 million

USAGM did not commission a survey in Cuba in FY 2021, so OCB's weekly audience remains unchanged in FY 2021.

## IMPACT OBJECTIVE 1

### Impact Performance Goal 1.2: Provide programming that audiences find trustworthy

Program Credibility – percentage of weekly audience who consider information to be very or somewhat trustworthy	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
VOA	83	84	83	83	80	81
RFE/RL	80	77	73	75	75	74
RFA	93	77	77	76	77	77
MBN	80	80	75	68	70	70
OCB	97	97	97	97	97	97

## IMPACT INDICATOR:

### Program Credibility

This indicator is determined by a question in representative surveys about trustworthiness of news and information of those sampled respondents who listened to or viewed each station in the past week. The answers are registered on a four-point scale: “Trust it a great deal,” “Trust it somewhat,” “Do not trust it very much,” “Do not trust it at all.” The credibility index is a weighted average, by audience size, of the percentage of those answering the question in the survey



(excluding those who did not respond or did not know) who report trusting news from the station a great deal or somewhat. Credibility estimates are not included for countries where the number of regular listeners/viewers/online users is so small (n = <50) that the estimate is unreliable.

#### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

VOA	Target: 80	Actual: 81
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VOA exceeded its program credibility target of 80 percent by one point. Changes in broadcasters' credibility scores tend to be driven by the differences in sizes of the markets measured year to year, rather than sudden changes in global perception. While growing audiences have historically correlated to lower levels of trust, VOA was able to maintain high credibility scores while also achieving significant audience growth.

RFE/RL	Target: 75	Actual: 74
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RFE/RL nearly met its program credibility target with a score of 74 percent. The network continues to hold a high level of credibility among its audience with almost three out of four weekly listeners, viewers, and online users rating its programming as "very" or "somewhat trustworthy," including in some markets where worsening opinions of the United States may have contributed to lower program credibility scores for the RFE/RL broadcast services operating there.

RFA	Target: 77	Actual: 77
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RFA's overall program credibility met its 77 percent target, but the score may be held low by the effect of China's large audience. China's more repressive control of media makes survey respondents reluctant to admit finding banned materials appealing or credible. Credibility numbers measured in the relatively more open markets of Cambodia and Burma were significantly higher in spite of active online attacks against RFA in both markets. RFA's credibility measure in USAGM's most recent Burmese survey module (96.9 percent) was up 10 percentage points from the previous survey in that country, less than two months before its democratically elected government was removed in a military coup on February 1, 2021.

**MBN****Target: 70****Actual: 70**

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MBN's program credibility score of 70 was on target. Because trust is based on a weighted average of MBN's total audience, trust for Alhurra is heavily based on trust in Iraq, where MBN has by far the largest audience. Trust in Iraq for Alhurra was 58.1 percent in the most recent USAGM national survey. Trust in other key countries including Lebanon and Saudi Arabia was much higher at 81.5 percent and 83.2 percent, respectively.

**OCB****Target: 97****Actual: 97**

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USAGM did not commission a survey in Cuba in FY 2021, so OCB's credibility score remains unchanged in FY 2021.

#### A CLOSER LOOK:

## Citations of USAGM reporting in influential news outlets and awards

**MEDIA CITATIONS** Seeking to discover the Russians behind a secretive drive to pay French and German social-media influencers to discredit the Pfizer vaccine, a team of reporters from RFE/RL's Russian Service and Central Newsroom dug into the story and found a Moscow-based businesswoman linked to Russia's ruling party, along with a network of Russian marketing companies known for selling dubious nutritional supplements and pushing malware. The scoop was widely picked up by other media outlets, including The Daily Beast, Newsru.com, Meduza, Blesk, EurasiaReview, and Oleg Kashin on Telegram. It also sparked broad dialogue with Bellingcat founder Eliot Higgins, former Estonian President Toomas Hendrick Ilves, and many others discussing the piece on social media.

An RFA live broadcast from February depicting Burmese police using force against protesters was cited by a number of sources including Reuters, Guardian, U.S. News and World Report, Bangkok Post, Nikkei Asia, and Guam Daily Post. RFA CCTV footage from March depicting Myanmar soldiers attacking ambulance workers was cited in The Guardian, Reuters, Washington Post, Rappler, Sky News, Straits Times, Times of London, Daily Beast, Independent, and Republic World.



*Members of the press at mass anti-coup protests in Yangon, Burma, Feb. 15, 2021. (RFA)*

VOA's interview segment with an Afghan-American woman who was left behind in Kabul was played in the NBC Nightly News in September. The interview was also the subject of articles, often including clips, in Newsweek, France 24, Business Insider, Fox News, New York Post, Real Clear Politics, the Daily

Mail (U.K.), The Blaze, Red State, Daily Caller, California News Times, and The Daily Telegraph (Australia). The interview was tweeted by politicians and media figures including Congressman Adam Kinzinger, Glenn Beck and Jennifer Griffin of Fox, and Barbara Starr of CNN.

MBN's reporting is regularly cited as a source of news in other media outlets, attesting to its role as an accurate and objective media outlet. This is particularly true when MBN is reporting on news regarding U.S. foreign policy. Interviews with U.S. ambassadors and State Department representatives were widely quoted in the Arabic press. News organizations such as Reuters, BBC Arabic and CNN Arabic also cited Alhurra's interview with Lebanese Foreign Minister Charbel Wehbe, when he appeared on Lebanese Scene and blamed Gulf nations for the rise of ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

### **AWARD-WINNING JOURNALISM**

The Lakota Daughters, a VOA documentary about the trials and triumphs of girls and women of the Oglala Lakota tribe on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, generated significant viewership and engagement across VOA



(VOA)

platforms. The film won prestigious journalism awards, including the 46th Gracie Award in the category of "Outstanding Original Online Programming – News/Documentary," a Jury Prize at the Loyola University Feminist Film Festival in New Orleans, and Audience Choice Best Documentary Short award at Kansas City FilmFest International 2021.



(VOA)

Since its release on World Refugee Day, VOA's ambitious documentary, "A Day in the Life of Refugees," was awarded Best Feature Documentary at the Luleå International Film Festival in Sweden. It has also been short-listed for other

prestigious awards yet to be

announced. The film was shot in 2019 by more than 75 news teams in 32 countries, and is now available in Persian and Spanish with productions underway in Russian for the Current Time network, Mandarin, and Indonesian, as well as Arabic by MBN. In addition, VOA had eight programs selected as finalists by the New York Festivals, including "From China with Love: An Adoption Story," which was broadcast on VOA Connect and garnered 1.2 million YouTube views.

RFA Mandarin was awarded a National Murrow Award by the Radio Television Digital News Association for a video series examining the impact of China's financial market on its citizens. RFA also garnered two top prizes at the 25th annual Hong Kong-based Human Rights Free Press Awards -- one for an RFA Mandarin audio series on tensions between the Vatican and Beijing over the appointment of Chinese bishops; one for commentary writing on newly launched Mandarin-language website WHYNOT/Wainao, which targets young Chinese around the world.

Three reporters with the RFE/RL Ukrainian Service investigative program,

*Schemes: Corruption in Detail*, were awarded the top prize in Ukraine's National



WHY NOT/Wainao Home Page. (RFA)

Investigative Journalism Competition for their report “The American Dream of Victor Medvedchuk,” which revealed that the family of Ukraine’s leading pro-Russian politician, Ukrainian MP Viktor Medvedchuk, has been selling refined oil products to the United States, despite sanctions placed against Medvedchuk by the U.S. Department of the Treasury in 2014 for his alleged role in Russia’s armed annexation of Crimea. The report was recognized as Ukraine’s best investigation of the year during a ceremony at the annual Mezhyhyria Fest International Journalism Festival in September.

MBN’s Alhurra was awarded seven Telly Awards honoring excellence in video and television, including four awards for its series *Alhurra Investigates*. The network was honored with two Gold Telly awards including one for Television: Best Political/Commentary for an *Alhurra Investigates* episode highlighting Saudi female activists. The program delved deeply into the reasons why women and dissidents are leaving Saudi Arabia, despite the Saudi government’s external message that a serious and a radical reform is taking place. Other *Alhurra Investigates* that won awards include an episode highlighting corruption among Sunni and Shai religious endowments in Iraq; the human trafficking of Yazidi children; and a look at who are killing the Sudanese protesters under the pretext of providing security and stability to the country.



## IMPACT OBJECTIVE 1

### Impact Performance Goal 1.3: Provide programming that increases the audiences' perceptions of their understanding of current events

Understanding – percent of weekly audience who report that the broadcasts have increased their understanding of current events somewhat or a great deal	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
VOA	81	76	76	75	76	75
RFE/RL	81	73	75	75	76	78
RFA	NA	52	52	52	51	51
MBN	71	70	66	65	70	50
OCB	96	96	96	96	80	96

#### IMPACT INDICATOR:

##### Understanding of current events

This indicator is determined by a question in representative surveys asking weekly listeners/viewers/online users of [language] whether the broadcasts have “increased their understanding of current events.” The answers are registered on a four-point scale: “a great deal,” “somewhat,” “very little,” or “not at all.” The understanding indicator is a weighted average, by audience size, of the percentage of those answering the question in the survey, excluding those who did not respond or did not know, who chose “a great deal” or “somewhat.”

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

VOA	Target: 76	Actual: 75
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VOA maintained its understanding score of 75 percent from FY 2020, but missed its target of 76 by one point. Scores on this metric continue to be higher in Africa, lower in Latin America and the Middle East, and mixed throughout Eurasia and East Asia.

RFE/RL	Target: 76	Actual: 78
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RFE/RL exceeded its understanding target reaching a figure of 78 percent in FY 2021, which was an increase after two years of holding steady at 75 percent. Almost four in five weekly listeners, viewers, or online users reported that RFE/RL programs increased their understanding of current events.

RFA	Target: 51	Actual: 51
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RFA's understanding metric is reflective almost entirely of metrics from the national survey conducted of Chinese audiences in FY 2018. China's more repressive control of media make survey respondents reluctant to admit finding banned materials appealing or credible. Understanding measures from a Cambodia national survey completed in October 2019, though significantly higher than those from China, failed to boost this metric because of the size of RFA's Chinese audience. No additional data were available for this metric in RFA markets in FY 2021.

MBN	Target: 70	Actual: 50
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MBN's score on this metric is based solely on data from Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Because it is weighted by audience size, it is much more reflective of Iraq—with a past week audience of 13.3 million, than of Saudi Arabia, with an audience of 2 million. Alhurra has been forced to significantly adjust operations in Iraq in the past two years because of ongoing threats to its journalists and continued government criticism, partly as the result of reporting on controversial issues. While reach in the country has reached a record high, audiences have ranked Alhurra lower on other impact measures.

OCB	Target: 80	Actual: 96
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USAGM did not commission a survey in Cuba in FY 2021, so OCB's understanding score remains unchanged in FY 2021.



## A CLOSER LOOK:

# Producing or curating content on issues important to audiences

**HEALTH** OCB's daily original reports from Cuba covered COVID-19 and the Pandemic. OCB reviewed the official numbers reported by the Ministry of Public Health and compared with those gathered from activists tracking data in hospitals in provinces throughout the country. Reports focused on the stress caused by the overload of COVID-19 cases in hospitals and the crisis it created due to lack of medication, shortage of personnel and overall deterioration of the government health system.



*Health reporter Lindord Moudou and doctors from across Africa answer viewer questions during a town hall on COVID. (VOA)*

VOA Africa services joined local African partner stations to co-produce virtual town halls in Swahili, Amharic, Portuguese, Somali, Hausa, French, and English with health care professionals answering viewer questions in-language – dispelling misinformation,

broadcasting public service announcements about hand washing and social distancing, and discussing the psychological strains of quarantine lockdowns.

**HUMAN RIGHTS** The worsening human rights conditions in Xinjiang and Hong Kong have been an important theme of RFA's coverage over the year. In FY 2021, RFA's Uyghur Service produced exclusive radio and television interviews with internment camp survivors and broadcast reports confirming China's attack on Uyghur language, culture, religion, traditions, customs, and values. RFA Uyghur sounded the alarm on the threat COVID-19 poses for crowded and unsanitary internment camps and exposed how Uyghurs were sent to China's factories to work during the height of the COVID-19 crisis. In contrast to Beijing's claim that it is providing job training and employment opportunities for Uyghurs, VOA

Mandarin interviewed many Uyghurs and international organizations on China's forced brainwashing camps, widespread surveillance, high-tech racial profiling, and banning of religious activities and cultural traditions.

Persecution of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang also affects RFE/RL communities. RFE/RL released several reports focusing on the horrors faced by ethnic Kazakhs and Kyrgyz minorities who managed to escape the "re-education" camps. RFE/RL's Kazakh Service issued a TV documentary, "Between Dictatorship and Democracy," about Sairagul Sauytbay, the first ethnic Kazakh female whistleblower from a Chinese political "re-education" camp in Xinjiang. Sauytbay escaped to Kazakhstan and was later arrested by Kazakh law-enforcement agencies. After revealing the horrors of life in the camps, Sauytbay became one of a dozen recipients of the U.S. State Department's 2020 International Women of Courage Award. In "Survivors of China's 'Re-education' Camps," Current Time detailed the personal experiences of those ethnic Kyrgyz and Kazakhs who managed to escape from China's infamous camps for Muslim minorities and find shelter in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.



*Sairagul Sauytbay describes conditions at Chinese "re-education" camp in the documentary "Between Dictatorship and Democracy." (RFE/RL)*

**TECHNOLOGY** MBN reported on the Global Emerging Technology Summit, including Sec. Blinken's remarks that cyberattacks on businesses must be prevented and the State Department's push for 'technological diplomacy' to promote democratic values. The network also curated acquired programming that highlighted some of the most prominent technological developments. One such documentary was *The Genetic Revolution* that explored the exciting, rapidly evolving world of genetic engineering. *The Gene Doctors* explored scientists who are exploring the root causes of babies born with hereditary disease. MBN's Alhurra reported on the UAE's Amal that sent back the first images of Mars from orbit, as well as NASA's Perseverance's successful landing on the Red Planet.

## IMPACT OBJECTIVE 1

# Impact Performance Goal 1.4: Provide programming that is influential with audiences

Helps form opinions on important topics Percentage of weekly audience who report that the broadcasts have helped them form opinions on important topics somewhat or a great deal	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
VOA	62	63	63	64	64	64
RFE/RL	55	52	56	53	54	58
RFA	82	87	87	85	90	93
MBN <sup>1</sup>	71	71	75	63	65	NA
OCB	75	75	75	75	75	75

<sup>1</sup> This question was not included in MBN's recent surveys.

## IMPACT INDICATOR:

### Helps form opinions

This indicator is determined by a question in representative surveys asking past week listeners/viewers/online users of [language] whether the broadcasts have helped them form opinions on important topics. The answers are registered on a four-point scale: “a great deal,” “somewhat,” “very little,” or “not at all.” This indicator is a weighted average, by audience size, of the percentage of those answering the question in the survey, excluding those who did not respond or did not know who chose “a great deal” or “somewhat.”

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

VOA	Target: 64	Actual: 64
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VOA met its target with a score of 64 percent of weekly users who say its content has helped them form their own opinions. This figure has been very stable for four years.

RFE/RL	Target: 54	Actual: 58
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RFE/RL's score of 58 percent of weekly users who say its content has helped them form their own opinions exceeded the target of 54 percent and was the highest figure measured since the metric has been tracked. Although reported usage of Radio Farda declined in Iran in the most recent survey, more weekly users now say that Radio Farda helps them to form their own opinions.

RFA	Target: 90	Actual: 93
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RFA exceeded its target with 93 percent of weekly users saying that its content helped them form opinions. This metric is based on data from Cambodia only where RFA is highly influential.

MBN	Target: 65	Actual: NA
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MBN does not have data for this indicator in FY 2021 because none of its surveys included this question. The use of shorter modules on omnibus surveys allows more frequent data collection but cannot include all USAGM impact indicators.

OCB	Target: 75	Actual: 75
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USAGM did not commission a survey in Cuba in FY 2021, so OCB's score of 75 percent of weekly users who say its content has helped them form their own opinions remains unchanged in FY 2021.

## A CLOSER LOOK:

# Original investigative reporting

Alhurra's award-winning weekly series *Alhurra Investigates* examines topics that made headlines throughout the year. In April, the Jordanian government claimed that Prince Hamzah bin al-Hussein and others led a plot to 'destabilize Jordan's security' and resulted in the arrest 17 high-profile personalities and putting Prince Hamzah under house confinement. *Alhurra Investigates* interviewed Jordanian insiders and intelligence officers who shared what the days leading up to the sedition entailed, and the role outside governments may have played in the attempted coup. Another episode of *Alhurra Investigates* uncovered how Hamas is illegally smuggling credit cards into the Palestinian Territories, an act that Israel says is to finance terrorist activities, but Hamas claims only funds charity.

An RFA Khmer Service report, part of an ongoing investigative series probing the overseas property interests of elite Cambodians, revealed how individuals with ties to the authoritarian government of Prime Minister Hun Sen were parking tens of millions of dollars into Australian real estate. Accessing federal court documents and corporate records, RFA also wrote about how the daughters of a top-ranked Cambodian general were embroiled in a \$100 million real estate fraud.

RFE/RL's Tatar-Bashkir Service report on Chinese influence received local, as well as international attention. As part of its investigative series "China's Expansion," the

Tatar-Bashkir Service looked at efforts by the government in Russia's Ulyanovsk region to promote the construction of the Chinese "Europe-Western China" transport corridor without any public discussion of the project with local residents, whose villages in some cases would be bisected by the road. After the episode was released, Ulyanovsk regional officials announced that they would re-orient a tourism project to address Russian, not Chinese, audiences as originally proposed. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)



Members of the Cambodian-Australian community protest against the Hun Sen in Sydney, March 16, 2019. (RFA)



also reacted, criticizing the failure of authorities to ensure that the project complied with human rights standards including transparency, accountability, and free, meaningful participation by the public in such a massive undertaking.

In March, a report by a U.N.-appointed panel of experts cited VOA Korean's exclusive reporting in September 2019 that uncovered North Korea's illicit money-making activity in Senegal where Pyongyang ran a construction company in Dakar in violation of U.N. sanctions. The VOA report shed light on how the North Korean regime uses various front companies abroad and secret construction projects to evade international sanctions. It drew keen attention from international media and U.N. and U.S. officials, prompting the U.N. panel to initiate an investigation shortly after the VOA report was released. The U.N. panel conducted its own investigations into the matter and released its findings in the report.

A month after the July protests in Cuba where hundreds of protesters were arrested, OCB initiated an audio-visual series taking a deep look at the impact on mothers whose children were incarcerated, as well as mothers who were taken from their children and sent to jail. The series shows the heartbreaking impact of this detention by Cuban government on individual Cuban families.

Bringing awareness to human rights issues, particularly by highlighting digital censorship, is another critical component of OTF's focus. An investigative series by BuzzFeed News, funded by OTF, won the Pulitzer Prize in International Reporting in 2021. The Xinjiang investigative series shed light on the numerous new prison and internment camps built by China over the past three years, underscoring their use against Muslim minorities despite competing claims by the government. With OTF support, the reporters uncovered the technique through which Chinese censors modified Baidu maps to digitally conceal camp locations.



*A birds-eye view of a new internment camp built in Shufu County, China. (Buzzfeed)*

## Impact Objective 2:

Reach and engage audiences in key strategic areas, including the information-denied, underserved, and targets of disinformation and extremist rhetoric

In deciding where to target its broadcasting, USAGM concurrently considers the U.S. national interest and countries that lack a free or developed press. USAGM prioritizes reaching audiences in areas plagued by extremism, where forces espouse violent ideologies and execute campaigns of terror that threaten U.S. national security, regional security, and democracy. Another key focus area is audiences subjected to state-sponsored disinformation campaigns, which seek to undermine democratic norms and objective truth. In all target countries, USAGM networks seek to grow their audience base and reach those traditionally underserved by USAGM broadcasts. Populations in the target countries are overwhelmingly young – a challenge, but also a chance to connect with a demographic that in many cases has never even heard of USAGM’s networks. USAGM’s audience is approximately 57 percent male and 43 percent female – an imbalance ripe for correcting. USAGM understands that to reach and be relevant with audiences, it needs to provide them with content that not only informs them of international and local news, but assists them in building and participating in a civil society.

USAGM will:

- Prioritize countries lacking freedom and democracy or faced with disinformation or extremism, where accurate, credible news and information are lacking.
- Introduce service in selected new languages to reach sizeable new audiences in countries where USAGM products are urgently needed.
- Reach out to women and youth with programming that addresses issues of concern and relevance to their lives.
- Sharpen audience segmentation and targeting to drive content strategies and better address gender and age demographics, as well as psychographic segments, which consider values, attitudes, and aspirations.

- Serve as a conduit for the transmission of reporting from inside closed societies lacking press freedom.
- Ensure strong local news coverage, as warranted by events, to meet urgent audience needs in areas of crisis.
- Draw on the experiences of America and other free societies to present a broad array of political views and debates.



# Impact Performance Goal Overview

Snapshot of Weekly Audience Reach in Key Countries

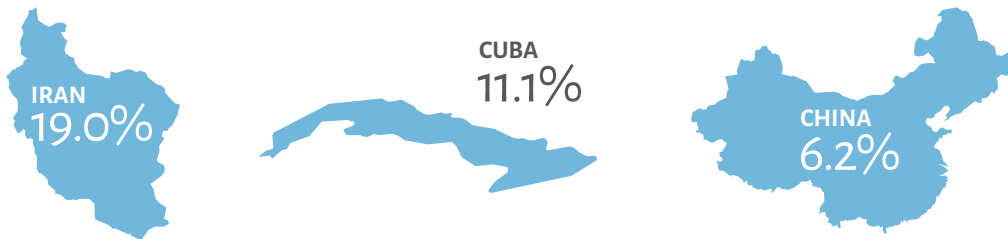
## 2.1

**Achieve significant audience reach in environments subject to extremist rhetoric and violence.**



## 2.2

**Reach audiences in information-denied environments.**



## 2.3

**Reach audiences in environments targeted by state-sponsored disinformation campaigns.**



## IMPACT OBJECTIVE 2

# Impact Performance Goal 2.1: Achieve significant audience reach in environments subject to extremist rhetoric and violence

	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
Increase or maintain weekly audiences in: <sup>1</sup>						
Iraq <sup>2</sup>	42.6% (Jan 2016)	42.6% (Jan 2016)	35.0% (Jul 2017)	61.7%	70.0%	71.9%
Nigeria	21.0% (Feb 2016)	21.0% (Feb 2016)	19.2% (Jul 2018)	19.2% (Jul 2018)	19.2%	19.2% (Jul 2018)
Afghanistan	38.5% (Nov 2016)	38.5% (Nov 2016)	69.3% (Jul 2018)	69.3% (Jul 2018)	69.3%	69.3% (Jul 2018)
Pakistan	2.9% (Aug 2016)	2.9% (Aug 2016)	5.3% (Jan 2019)	5.3% (Jan 2019)	5.3%	5.3% (Jan 2019)
Former FATA region <sup>3</sup>	26.4% (Jun 2015)	26.4% (Jun 2015)	26.4% (Jun 2015)	N/A	26.4%	N/A
Central Asia <sup>4</sup>	3.9 million	3.9 million	4.3 million	4.3 million	4.3 million	4.3 million

<sup>1</sup> Multi-country estimates are presented in real numbers, rather than percentages, because of the potential high variations in percentages across covered countries. The countries and regions listed were selected by USAGM experts and represent a subset of those that USAGM networks target with programming that provides news and information to counter extremist messaging.

<sup>2</sup> The 2021 Iraq estimate includes data from two different surveys, one among Iraqi Arabs and one among Iraqi Kurds. In previous years, reach among Iraqi Arabs and Kurds was collected in a single survey. Fieldwork for the survey among Iraqi Arabs took place in August 2020; fieldwork for the Iraqi Kurdish survey took place in October 2019.

<sup>3</sup> The last USAGM survey of former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) was conducted in June 2015, outside of the five-year reporting window for USAGM research. USAGM has tried to receive permission from local authorities to conduct a new survey in the Tribal Areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa without success.

<sup>4</sup> Includes data from Kazakhstan (Nov 2016), Kyrgyzstan (Oct 2018), Tajikistan (June 2017), Turkmenistan (June 2019), Uzbekistan (May 2017).

## IMPACT INDICATOR:

Weekly audience is defined under Impact Performance Goal 1.1.

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

Of the listed countries, new survey results were available in FY 2021 only for Iraq, where USAGM audiences grew to 71.9 percent, exceeding the target of 70 percent. Among the non-Kurdish population in Iraq, past week reach reached 76.9 percent.

## A CLOSER LOOK:

# Programming responding to crisis situations

**AFGHANISTAN** USAGM's networks have been trusted brands in Afghanistan for decades and they were critical sources of information as the U.S. withdrew and the Taliban took over. VOA featured wall-to-wall coverage on the developments with contributions from their Afghan and Deewa Services, as well as the News Center, Persian, and other language services. VOA's Islamabad bureau chief, who was in Kabul when it fell, was in constant demand for live hits from news organizations around the world, including CNN, NPR, MSNBC, and Fox News. Both VOA and RFE/RL saw huge spikes in web traffic and social media engagement during this

period. In Afghanistan, RFE/RL continues to perform critical surrogate reporting including taking a look at how radically life has changed for ordinary Afghans, particularly women, since the Taliban takeover. RFE/RL has aired the voices of women speaking about life under the Taliban;

examined the Taliban's new dress code and segregation rules for women at universities; and also taken a look at the worsening situation for ethnic and religious minorities in the country. RFE/RL also leveraged its regional expertise to report on the consequences that are spilling beyond Afghanistan's borders, including collaboration by RFE/RL's Afghan and Tajik Services to take a closer look at the Taliban's troop build-up along the 1,300-kilometer border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan, as well as a series of reports covering the situation with Afghan refugees on the border.



*VOA's Islamabad bureau chief Ayesha Tanzeem reports from Afghanistan. (VOA)*



*Mohammad Ilyas Dayee*  
(RFE/RL)

Journalist safety has long been a concern in Afghanistan. In November 2020, RFE/RL journalist Mohammad Ilyas Dayee was killed in a targeted attack in Helmand. Many other USAGM journalists have faced direct threats from terrorist networks due to their work. As the U.S. withdrawal began, USAGM worked with its networks and interagency partners to arrange the safe passage of its journalists out of Afghanistan, but the Taliban's rapid advance stymied these efforts. While the agency was eventually able to facilitate safe passage

for some journalists and their family members, there are some still waiting for the opportunity to flee to safety. USAGM is committed to do everything it can to support these courageous journalists and their families.

**BURMA** In response to a military coup in Myanmar in February 2021, USAGM expanded coverage and launched a 24/7 direct-to-home TV satellite channel for Burma, providing uncensored news and information. The channel, called “Ludu Meitswe,” which means “Friend of the People,” features Burmese content from both VOA and RFA. Even before the coup, VOA had extremely strong numbers in the country. In 2020, 24 percent of adults in Myanmar reported consuming VOA on a weekly basis, with 94 percent of those users saying VOA's content was trustworthy, one of VOA's highest credibility ratings. After the coup, analytics on digital platforms exploded. In spite of intermittent blocking and internet outages by the junta, the service set a new record for site visits with over 290 million in FY 2021, more than six times the traffic of the previous year. Across their site and social platforms, VOA Burmese generated over 827 million video views, double the views from the previous year.



*“Lud Meitswe” direct-to-home TV  
satellite channel launched in 2021*  
(VOA/RFA)

RFA Burmese has emerged as an essential source of independent news as Myanmar has experienced tectonic shifts in its politics. Even before the coup that triggered popular protests and a bloody crackdown, RFA Burmese was challenging the narratives of the military, through its uncompromising coverage of ethnic conflicts. As authorities have rounded up journalists, RFA reporters have continued to operate, documenting the protest movement and military repression in twice-daily news bulletins. When an RFA reporter challenged the military spokesman live on state TV on Feb. 16, the confrontation was viewed 5 million times in 24 hours and drew 660,000 reactions on Facebook.

**ETHIOPIA** Lingering ethnic tensions exploded into full-scale conflict between Ethiopia's national government and its Tigray province. VOA's Horn of Africa Service covers both perspectives – at times, being criticized by each side for being “unfair” to it on the same story, an indication of the strong feelings at play. Responding to threats that VOA content would be censored on its Ethiopian affiliates, the August 2021 launch of a direct-to-home satellite TV channel focusing on the Horn of Africa will move VOA into an even more preeminent position in the territory, with newscasts in Amharic, Afan Oromo, Tigrigna, and Somali. On the ground, VOA focused on the human story of the fighting, preparing a first-person documentary on refugees from Tigray who fled to neighboring Eritrea. In a series of wrenching TV and web reports, VOA documented searing personal accounts of rapes, killings, plunder and other atrocities by marauding soldiers during the conflict there. The coverage verified what had been, until then, mostly anecdotal and unsubstantiated accounts from the region.

**HAITI** VOA Creole provided wall-to-wall coverage and special programming for audiences in Haiti after the August 14 earthquake in Les Cayes. Hours after the 7.2-magnitude earthquake, VOA Creole mobilized reporters in Les Cayes and Port-au-Prince to report on the aftermath. Stringers on the ground provided multimedia coverage of the impact, interviewing victims, officials and aid workers. In addition to the on the scene reporting, VOA Creole staff in the U.S. focused on covering humanitarian efforts, government reactions, and the role of the diaspora. A Creole Service stringer was the first to give a glimpse of the damage. His video posted on VOA Creole's Instagram showed a damaged house where medical students had been staying when the earthquake hit. The service

has seen an uptick in digital platform growth – from mid-August to September 1, Creole website traffic grew by 50 percent, video views by 37 percent, Facebook engagement by 112 percent, and Facebook video views by 134 percent.

**CUBA** On July 11, 2021, when anti-government protests broke out in Cuba, OCB immediately started retransmitting live images from participants on Martí's Facebook page and reporting on digital platforms. The noon Radio Martí newscast went live that Sunday and provided uninterrupted coverage for the next 12 hours. All radio programs were simultaneously transmitted via Facebook Live. Shortwave radio transmissions were increased to full power and overnight hours were added to the schedule during the hours and days that followed. In addition, OCB created a live update page on their website where stories were updated in blog-like fashion.



## A CLOSER LOOK:

# Examples of USAGM impact in environments subject to extremism

MBN not only reported on extremism and its impact on the region, but also on the underlying causes. Poverty, disenfranchisement with society, political or religious marginalization all can lead people to look for other ways that fulfill the needs that are not being met. In this past year, Alhurra launched \$2, a program that examines the economic and social challenges facing much of the Middle East and what is being done to combat it.



*Alhurra's program \$2 focuses on poverty in the Middle East. (MBN)*

## The VOA Kurdish Service

consistently provides coverage from the areas affected by the fight against ISIS in northern Syria and Iraq. Kurdish Service reports from the local population centers and refugee camps in the area featuring the victims of the extremist movements shed light on the dangers of religious radicalism.

VOA's Bosnian and Albanian Services continued to report on violent extremism and the deradicalization efforts in their respective media markets, working closely with VOA's News Center to version stories into English and make them visible to users globally. Highlights included reports on repatriation of women and children from camps in Syria, which slowed down due to the coronavirus pandemic, causing international concerns about the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation at the camps under the control of the Kurdish-led SDF.

In February, VOA Deewa launched a 24-hour "direct to home" TV stream, for its critical Pashto-speaking audience in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, including the newly merged tribal districts in Balochistan, as well as Pashtuns living in Karachi and elsewhere in Pakistan. This allows citizens in the region to see and hear Deewa and connects them with the world through news, features, interactive

programs and segments on life in America. RFE/RL's Radio Mashaal traced Taliban spillover into Northwest Pakistan. The service was closely tracking the potential spillover and strengthening of extremist sympathies in Pakistan following the sudden rise to power of the Taliban in Afghanistan, which has been openly celebrated in Pakistan by media outlets, religious parties, and even some government officials.



## IMPACT OBJECTIVE 2

### Impact Performance Goal 2.2: Reach audiences in information-denied environments

	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
Increase or maintain weekly audiences in: <sup>1</sup>						
China	0.28% (Jun 2014)	6.2% (Aug 2017)	6.2% (Aug 2017)	6.2% (Aug 2017)	6.2%	6.2% (Aug 2017)
Vietnam	3.6% (July 2016)	3.6% (July 2016)	3.6% (Jul 2016)	3.6% (Jul 2016)	6.5%	11.2% (Dec 2020)
Laos	2.4% (Sep 2016)	2.4% (Sep 2016)	2.4% (Sep 2016)	2.4% (Sep 2016)	3.5%	4.7% (Dec 2020)
Turkmenistan	NA	NA	6.1% (Jun 2019)	6.1% (Jun 2019)	6.1%	6.1% (Jun 2019)
Uzbekistan	1.6% (May 2017)	1.6% (May 2017)	1.6% (May 2017)	1.6% (May 2017)	2.0%	1.6% (May 2017)
Iran	14.9% (Aug 2015)	23.4% (Sep 2017)	23.4% (Sep 2017)	23.4% (Sep 2017)	18.0%	19.0% (Mar 2021)
Azerbaijan <sup>2</sup>	3.5% (Dec 2015)	3.5% (Dec 2015)	3.5% (Dec 2015)	3.5% (Dec 2015)	3.5%	N/A
Cuba	11.1% (Mar 2017)	11.1% (Mar 2017)	11.1% (Mar 2017)	11.1% (Mar 2017)	13.0%	11.1% (Mar 2017)
Continue to serve and monitor information-denied environments lacking representative survey data, including North Korea, Eritrea, Syria, Tibet, and Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.						

<sup>1</sup> Selected countries include those targeted by USAGM networks, in which USAGM is able to conduct research, that have the lowest press freedom scores on external indices.

<sup>2</sup> The last USAGM survey of Azerbaijan covers was conducted in December 2015, outside of the five-year reporting window for USAGM research.

**IMPACT INDICATOR:**

Weekly audience is defined under Impact Performance Goal 1.1.

**ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:**

Of the listed countries, new survey results were available in FY 2021 only for Vietnam, Laos, and Iran. In all three countries, USAGM audiences exceeded the targets. In Vietnam and Laos, audiences doubled or more since the previous surveys. In Iran, USAGM audiences declined to 19.0 percent from the previous 23.4 percent in 2017. This drop was due in part to the elimination of medium wave broadcasting to Iran and standalone TV newscasts for RFE/RL's Radio Farda, as well as Iranians' declining use of radio overall. VOA maintained its weekly reach of 15.9 percent since last measured in 2017, despite continued state efforts to block content. Media consumption in Iran, especially among younger target audiences, has migrated from television to internet and social media, and both VOA and RFE/RL saw growth in their digital audiences.

## A CLOSER LOOK:

# Examples of USAGM impact in information-denied environments

**IRAN** Iranians turn to RFE/RL's Farda on digital platforms, satellite TV, and radio for objective, professional reporting that fact-checks and analyzes the leading stories of the day, and for the opportunity to engage in responsible, robust discussion of stories that are not fully covered by media inside Iran. Despite being officially blocked within Iran, Farda received 175 million visits to its websites and news app, as well as 692 million video views across social media networks in FY 2021. Notably, despite being barred from any official reporting presence on the ground in Iran, Farda is one of the few news organizations that effectively employs in-country sources and community journalism to report news from inside Iran.



*Radio Farda coverage is enhanced by the use of community journalists who provide video from the site of news events like elections. (RFE/RL)*

During Iran's elections, VOA365, the 24/7 Persian-language satellite TV network from VOA in collaboration with RFE/RL, added 13 hours of special, election-related programming and a wide variety of perspectives from 65 high-profile

experts. VOA's social media coverage of the election generated 14.7 million video views across platforms in the three days in June surrounding the elections. VOA uses digital and social media to share its content and reach a younger audience in Iran. VOA Persian had over 122 million website visits in FY 2021, a 24 percent increase from the previous period. On social media their videos drew over 730 million video views. During the service's coverage of the U.N. General Assembly, audience engagement totaled nearly 3.15 million people. VOA has achieved early success with Telegram, a "blocked" application that 45 million Iranians use to defy government censorship and share messages, text, photos, and videos. Using short videos and pictures with short captions, VOA Persian is able to report quickly and its Telegram audience grew 14 percent this year.

**CHINA** RFA's Chinese Services broadcast to both Mainland Chinese and Hong Kong populations and have been at the forefront of covering both the ongoing COVID-19 crisis in China and the rapid deterioration of press and political freedom in Hong Kong. On the Mainland, RFA's Chinese services maintained focus on the CCP's crackdown on house churches and religious freedom, on CCP history and on the real lives of ordinary citizens today. RFA's coverage of Hong Kong grew in prominence and importance, exposing the hollowness of the CCP promise of "one country, two systems." Reporters have been on the streets and in courts as Hong Kong's activists young and old have continued to call out Beijing's attempts to control the former British colony. As the Beijing-backed government of Hong Kong began implementing the National Security Law passed by China's National People's Congress and prominent democrats and student leaders faced prosecution or fled, Hong Kong people turned to RFA Cantonese to tell their stories.

Considering the massive and sophisticated disinformation campaign by the Chinese government in response to calls for an independent investigation of the origin of the Coronavirus, VOA's Mandarin Service devoted substantial resources to reveal, dissect and analyze the falsehoods and provide fact-based information. VOA launched a Mandarin version of its fact-checking website, Polygraph. It debunked Beijing's misinformation on such topics as China's behavior in the South China Sea and Beijing's human rights record in Hong Kong and Xinjiang, getting excellent attention despite China's ongoing censorship of VOA content.

# News pick-ups from inside closed regimes

**RUSSIA** A joint investigation by RFE/RL's Russian Service, Bellingcat, The Insider, and Der Spiegel tracked the production of deadly chemical weapons and revealed Russian scientists' ties to military intelligence. Russia has repeatedly denied possessing or developing chemical weapons. The year-long investigation found evidence that suggests the Novichok nerve agent – identified as the substance used to poison Kremlin critics Sergei Skripal in 2018 and Aleksei Navalny in August 2020 – is still being produced in Russia. The investigation was picked up by The Washington Post, The Telegraph, CNN, Bloomberg, Forbes, Dozhd, Deutsche Welle, and other news outlets.

**BELARUS** RFE/RL is the top source for on-the-ground information about the protests, detention and torture of Belarusians, and political turmoil that continues in Belarus. The Belarus Service collected first-person witness accounts of detention and torture by authorities, including police brutally beating detainees. Footage from the Belarus Service was repackaged by Current Time telling the story of relatives' difficulties finding detained loved ones. In an episode of his weekly show, Last Week Tonight, John Oliver used two RFE/RL stories as graphics in his long segment about Belarus.



**CHINA** RFA reports from closed societies provide a window for the rest of the world into life under these regimes. In April, RFA covered the Chinese government's detention of Christians in secretive, mobile "transformation" facilities and the methods they employed to get them to renounce their faith. This report was cited by Daily Wire, Fox News, New York Post, Christian Post, Asian Herald, Persecution, Latestly, ANI, Christianity Daily, and Post Millennial.

As an indication of VOA Mandarin's impact, its reporting frequently became the target of Chinese state media. Global Times, one of the most influential Chinese Communist Party mouthpieces with over 100 million followers on social media

closely follows VOA Mandarin's coverage on important issues. After a VOA Mandarin talk show discussed how Global Times used disinformation to fan anti-West nationalism in China, the newspaper's Editor-in-Chief Hu Xijin penned an opinion piece, attacking VOA for "creating huge lies" to "smear China." In response to a VOA report on the human rights issues in Beijing's enforcement of draconian COVID control measures, Global Times published an editorial, accusing VOA of "attacking China and its superior political system despite China's huge success in controlling the pandemic."

**CUBA** OCB's content has been cited by several national and international media during and after the protests of July 11, including National Review and The Washington Post.

## IMPACT OBJECTIVE 2

### Impact Performance Goal 2.3: Reach audiences in environments targeted by state-sponsored disinformation campaigns

	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
Increase or maintain weekly audiences in: <sup>1</sup>						
The Russian Federation	4.9% (Jun 2016)	7.7% (May 2018)	7.7% (May 2018)	7.7% (May 2018)	7.7%	7.7% (May 2018)
Ukraine	18.0% (Jun 2016)	18.0% (Jun 2016)	18.0% (Jun 2016)	24.4% (May 2019)	21%	20.8% (Dec 2020)
Moldova	32.1% (Feb 2016)	32.1% (Feb 2016)	32.1% (Feb 2016)	32.2% (Nov 2019)	32%	32.2% (Nov 2019)
Kazakhstan	9.6% (Nov 2016)	9.6% (Nov 2016)	9.6% (Nov 2016)	9.6% (Nov 2016)	10%	9.6% (Nov 2016)
Tajikistan	10.8% (Jun 2017)	10.8% (Jun 2017)	10.8% (Jun 2017)	10.8% (Jun 2017)	11%	10.8% (Jun 2017)
Estonia	5.1% (Jun 2016)	5.1% (Jun 2016)	5.1% (Jun 2016)	12.9% (Nov 2019)	13%	12.9% (Nov 2019)
Latvia	5.2% (Jul 2016)	5.2% (Jul 2016)	5.2% (Jul 2016)	14.3% (Oct 2019)	15%	14.3% (Oct 2019)
Lithuania	10.0% (Jul 2016)	10.0% (Jul 2016)	10.0% (Jul 2016)	11.7% (Oct 2019)	12%	11.7% (Oct 2019)

<sup>1</sup> The countries and regions listed were selected by USAGM experts and represent a subset of those that USAGM networks target with programming that provides news and information to counter state-sponsored propaganda.

#### IMPACT INDICATOR:

Weekly audience is defined under Impact Performance Goal 1.1.

#### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

Of the listed countries, new survey results were available in FY 2021 only for Ukraine, where audiences declined slightly but met the targeted level.

#### CONTEXTUAL INDICATORS:

Freedom House Rankings	# of USAGM target countries ranked		
	Not Free	Partly Free	Free
2021 Freedom in the World (political)	54	52	21

Reporters Without Borders Rankings	# of USAGM target countries ranked				
	Very Bad	Bad	Problematic	Fairly Good	Good
2021 World Press Freedom Index	21	48	44	12	1



## A CLOSER LOOK:

# Examples of USAGM impact in environments targeted by state-sponsored disinformation campaigns

**RUSSIA** RFE/RL provides an alternative to Kremlin-controlled media and narratives in countries across the region where Moscow attempts to influence perceptions. RFE/RL has nine projects addressing discrete segments of the audience in Russia in four languages (Russian, Chechen, Tatar, Bashkir); eight of these projects have been designated “foreign media carrying out the functions of a foreign agent” by the Russian Justice Ministry in an effort to discredit RFE/RL. The RFE/RL-led Current Time TV and digital network provides Russian-speakers across Russia, Ukraine, Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Baltics, Eastern Europe, and as far away as Israel with access to factual, accurate, topical, and trustworthy information. RFE/RL’s Russian Service, Radio Svoboda, is on the forefront of reporting on the socio-political environment inside of the Russian Federation, relying on a vast network of regional correspondents. The Tatar-Bashkir Service and North Caucasus Service report on taboo issues to audiences in Russia’s most vulnerable locales. Despite the immense pressure campaign by Russian authorities, Current Time and the Russian Service have brought audiences investigations and live protest coverage, the Tatar-Bashkir Service has offered on-the-ground reporting from labor camps, and the North Caucasus Service has exposed atrocities against the LGBTQ+ community in Chechnya – this type of reporting is otherwise completely unavailable in the Russian market.



*Reporter from the RFE/RL Tatar-Bashkir Services report from Cheboksary, Russia. (RFE/RL)*

In a 25-minute investigative video report, aired on Current Time and distributed on social media, video-sharing sites and OTT platforms, VOA Russian examined in-depth how Russian propaganda attempts to discredit Western vaccines while

promoting its own Sputnik V. The report featured interviews with prominent U.S. and European scientists, who debunked Moscow's disinformation and provided statistical evidence of superior effectiveness of Western vaccines, such as Pfizer. The scientists, including authors of publications in major medical journals like The Lancet, questioned the quality and transparency of Sputnik manufacturing as well as its clinical trials, which resulted in the World Health Organization (WHO) suspending the approval process for Sputnik V in September 2021.

#### A CLOSER LOOK:

## Programming targeting groups underrepresented in USAGM audiences

VOA is in its third year of participation in the BBC's 50:50 Project, a data-driven media effort to promote equitable gender representation. In FY 2021, participation of VOA services grew to its highest level yet. VOA is a leader within the community of more than 100 media organizations that participate in the 50:50 Project worldwide. VOA joined the UN Women Media Compact, a growing initiative with nearly 100 media partners at present. The Compact focuses on approaches and initiatives that bring gender equality and gender-related issues to the forefront of media coverage. VOA services target women with tailored programming, such as Deewa's flagship TV show, *Bibi Shereena*, which promotes women's rights in a challenging environment dominated by patriarchal mores, and VOA Persian's original prime-time TV special "Gender and Elections in Iran" that investigated the lack of gender parity, institutional barriers, and women's underrepresentation in election politics in Iran.

OCB targets underserved populations through a number of specialized programs. *Abriendo Espacios (Opening Spaces)*, a weekly radio program, explores women's issues, as they exist in Cuba today. It conducts interviews with women in Cuba on a regular basis but also offers empowerment tools and inspirational examples. *Arcoiris (Rainbow)*, a weekly radio program, highlights the needs, interests and challenges of Cuba's LGBTQ community. In efforts to engage the Island youth, OCB developed *Subterraneo (Underground)*, a "webisode" series telling the history of the Cuban hip-hop movement and the censorship that has accompanied the growth of this musical genre.



(OCB)

According to studies, nearly 60 percent of the Arab world is under the age of 30. MBN focuses on that demographic by reporting on stories and producing shows that reflect the issues

that generation is dealing with, including positive inroads that have been made. Alhurra-Iraq's *Youth Talk* is a weekly program that provides an outlet for young adults to see stories that directly impact them, including interviews with their peers and analysis from Iraqi experts. As the Iraqi Parliamentary elections, scheduled for Oct. 10, 2021 get closer, *Youth Talk* spoke with activists and youth leaders of the protest movements about what reforms they want to see from a new government. Another episode examined how the younger generation deals with a law enforcement that is riddled with corruption, nepotism and bureaucracy. While Sawa Levant and Sawa Iraq have dedicated programs to women, *Jousour* (Bridges) and *Ta' Al Ta'nith* (She) respectively. Both discuss female empowerment and women's rights issues including: women detained by the Syrian regime and their struggle as they try to move forward with their lives; female representation in the Iraqi Parliament and the effects of genital mutilation on girls.

RFE/RL targets youth and women across their broadcast region, with programming such as "Women Leaders" and "Breaking Silence" in Afghanistan and "Glasom mladih" ("Youth's Voice"), a biweekly podcast of RFE/RL's Balkan Service. They regularly cover LGBTQ issues in their programming, such as Current Time stories about an openly gay mountain climber in Kyrgyzstan and the first openly gay Christian priest in Russia. RFE/RL also addresses the needs of underserved segments of population, such as patients with rare diseases, migrants, people with mental and physical disabilities, and other vulnerable groups.

## Impact Objective 3:

### Overcome censorship to connect audiences in closed societies

Over the past seven decades, U.S. international broadcasting has fought censorship in all its forms. Today, even as the global media environment undergoes a dynamic revolution, access to a free press is actually in decline globally. Jamming of radio and television broadcasts continues in a number of countries. Journalists suffer harassment and violence daily. Media laws often restrict free flows of information, limiting the ability of international news organizations to distribute their content. The internet in particular is under assault as audiences increasingly access and share USAGM content on digital platforms and via social media. The agency upholds the right of citizens everywhere to receive and impart information without restriction. USAGM works on many fronts to make news and information accessible to its global audiences with the aim of enabling not only unfettered access to agency products, but also the full spectrum of independent news sources on the internet.

USAGM will:

- Lead in assisting people around the world to gain access to information on all platforms, advocating on the international stage and coordinating within the U.S. government and with international broadcasters and other allies.
- Help audiences understand through journalistic reports the practices and policies of internet censorship and circumvention.
- Fund technologies that counter internet censorship and internet blocking and allow citizens and journalists to operate securely online.
- Increase effective use of social media and digital platforms to combat censorship.
- Provide in-house digital expertise to address real-time censorship and jamming issues in targeted regions.
- Cultivate information-sharing relationships on internet freedom matters with other federal agencies, nonprofits, and the private sector.

### IMPACT OBJECTIVE 3

## Impact Performance Goal 3.1: Increase usage of internet freedom products

	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
Weekly unique users on USAGM-supported proxy tools	649,040	967,763	621,392	555,443	1,300,000	1,538,461
Weekly visits to USAGM web sites through USAGM-supported proxy tools	8,794,243	8,452,100	7,092,592	3,607,942	6,115,000	7,975,000
Proxy traffic through USAGM-supported tools	15,402 TB	21,725 TB	15,875 TB	15,739 TB	33,612 TB	22,718 TB

#### IMPACT INDICATORS:

##### Aspects of usage of USAGM-supported proxy tools

The measures for this performance goal reflect various aspects of usage of various USAGM-supported proxy tools for circumventing internet censorship: Psiphon, nthLink, and NewNode. Metrics include average number of weekly unique users on the tools, average weekly visits to USAGM websites through the tools (measured as the number of landing pages served), and annual proxy traffic through the tools. In order to be more comprehensive and inclusive of new tools, USAGM is reporting overall figures for these categories beginning in FY 2021, rather than separately for each tool.

In FY 2021, USAGM-supported proxy tools were available for USAGM audiences in 27 languages: Afan Oromo, Amharic, Arabic, Azerbaijani, Belarusian, Burmese, Cantonese, Chechen, Crimean, Dari, English, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Mandarin, Pashto, Persian, Russian, Spanish, Tajik, Tibetan, Tigrigna, Turkmen, Ukrainian, Urdu, Uyghur, Uzbek, and Vietnamese.

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

**Weekly unique users**      **Target: 1,300,000**      **Actual: 1,538,461**

In FY 2021, weekly unique users of proxy tools nearly tripled and exceeded the target by 18 percent.

**Weekly visits to USAGM web sites**      **Target: 6,115,000**      **Actual: 7,975,000**

In FY 2021, weekly visits to USAGM web sites through proxy tools more than doubled and exceeded the target by 30 percent.

**Proxy Traffic**      **Target: 33,612 TB**      **Actual: 22,718 TB**

In FY 2021, proxy traffic increased by 44 percent but fell short of the target by 32 percent. This lower than projected bandwidth usage figure, in the context of increased users and visits, reflects more efficient performance by Psiphon and nthLink, as well as increased usage of new decentralized tools, such as NewNode, that do not track bandwidth as a metric.

### Contextual Indicator:

Freedom House Rankings	# of countries with customized USAGM-sponsored circumvention tools ranked as:		
	Not Free	Partly Free	Not Ranked
2021 Freedom on the Net	11	1	4

## A CLOSER LOOK:

# Development of new technologies and activities to counter internet censorship and blocking



## 2 billion people

regularly use OTF-supported technologies right now to circumvent online censorship and increase their digital security



Netizens leaping over China's Great Firewall



Cubans accessing alternative media on the island



Activists avoiding repressive surveillance in Iran



Protesters circumventing internet shutdowns in Turkey



Journalists staying safe online in Russia

USAGM's OTF-supported projects reached significant milestones and successes, advancing efforts toward a free and open internet. In its capacity assisting USAGM broadcasters, OTF created and managed numerous mirror sites in heavily censored areas. OTF's new Entity Support Program began providing tailored digital security assistance for USAGM language services broadcasting into the most repressive environments. Through the USAGM Technology at Scale fund, OTF expanded the robust circumvention tools available to broadcasters and audiences, along with diversifying the agency's approach to unblocking content. By supporting multiple circumvention technologies and device-to-device circumvention and

communications tools, OTF has helped millions of unique users discover and access USAGM content and other websites censored by repressive governments.

With over 30 new projects underway and dozens more receiving ongoing support, OTF continues to improve internet access, advance awareness of privacy and security threats, and reinforce protections for those seeking unblocked content and free expression. One recent OTF project uses a genetic algorithm that automatically learns how to evade censorship, providing users with the circumvention tools needed to view content while living in a repressive environment. The tool currently has applications on both the user-side and the



server-side, allowing for broader detection of censorship and more robust circumvention. The project has already discovered dozens of new techniques to evade censors. Another valuable OTF circumvention tool allows users in uncensored countries and environments to leverage their connections to provide access to content for those living and operating in heavily censored areas. Over the past year this program was updated with major improvements and a variety of essential user-friendly features. OTF has also helped pioneer new publisher-side circumvention techniques giving content providers the tools they need to make censored content more resilient to blocking and more easily available to their intended audiences.

Just as vital as providing access to content is ensuring that those creating and accessing that content can do so safely and free from repressive surveillance. OTF continues to drive innovations in the secure messaging space through projects that leveraged email encryption to create an adaptable, decentralized secure messenger. OTF's support of secure communications tools have helped provide safe methods for journalists and activists to securely communicate with their sources.

OTF continues to address the threat of internet shutdowns in repressive environments globally by supporting the development and adaptation of tools for use in shutdowns scenarios. These tools are less reliant on direct internet connections and rely heavily on peer-to-peer protocols. Such tools include offline app stores that allow users to easily share applications with others in their vicinity without an internet connection. Additional tools that have been bolstered over the past year with OTF support focused on peer-to-peer distribution networks of locally-cached content, a method that mirrors how one accesses content on the internet, but draws from local resources. Similarly, OTF has supported peer-to-peer communications platforms that do not require access to the internet. OTF has worked with the Pangea team to embed circumvention technology in all of its apps, allowing audiences to access USAGM content even in the most repressive environments.


# Education about and promotion of circumvention and digital security technologies

In 2021, USAGM held its seventh annual OTF summit. The online event successfully brought together 135 attendees with diverse expertise in technology, journalism, human rights, and OTF-supported endeavors. With the pandemic affecting much of the internet freedom community and the projects USAGM supports, the annual summit focused on sharing research, co-developing internet freedom solutions, and assisting OTF in enhancing its support mechanisms.

During FY 2021, OTF also supported its sixth class of fellows from the Information Controls Fellowship Program (ICFP). The fellows completed work on a wide range of projects including applied research on information control developments and advancing circumvention and anonymity techniques.














OTF-supported research projects have also helped to measure and analyze techniques used by government censors. For example, ongoing censorship monitoring platforms in China have provided regular insight into the techniques that China uses to maintain the country's content-blocking and censorship regime. Such research has helped inform how circumvention tools can better serve USAGM entities and audiences. Ongoing research projects also aim to increase the security and privacy of VPNs and other commonly used internet freedom technologies.

In February 2021, OTF reopened its Rapid Response Fund. Within the first month, nine rapid response applications for direct funding were approved. OTF's Rapid



## Rapid Response Assistance

OTF has provided Rapid Response assistance for digital emergencies in more than 20 places in the world.

 Iran	 Myanmar	 Thailand
 Azerbaijan	 Sudan	 Pakistan
 Vietnam	 Mexico	 The Gambia
 Uganda	 Rwanda	 Tibet
 Bahrain		

Response Fund has provided secure hosting, security audits, and website sanitation to civil society organizations, while simultaneously providing direct funding for emergency digital security efforts on the ground to support journalists, human rights defenders, civil society groups, and activists. Rapid response funds have been particularly relied upon in Burma where the recent military coup and subsequent internet shutdowns have cut off and imperiled journalists and civil society groups. In addition, Rapid Response funds have supported internet freedom actions in Venezuela, Cameroon, Ukraine, and more.

OTF also supported projects to improve the digital security of USAGM journalists and audiences. These projects have focused on specific countries and regions. In addition to more traditional interventions, OTF helped establish help desk support for journalists, human rights defenders, activists, and civil society groups under threat. The help desks provide support for digital security, digital emergency response training, threat research analysis, and technology development.

## Impact Objective 4:

### Optimize program delivery by market and expand engagement on digital platforms

It is essential that USAGM reach audiences on their preferred media platforms. USAGM is aligning how it delivers content with how consumers access it now and in the future. USAGM will continue growing and enhancing new distribution methods, with specific attention to social and mobile platforms. On traditional media, USAGM is continually migrating to the most effective broadcast channels, including satellite and broadcast television and FM radio. The agency is aggressively expanding and improving on its successful model of affiliations and syndication of content on all platforms. Ultimately, USAGM seeks to utilize the platforms that work best for the market at hand to get content to as many users as possible.

USAGM will:

- Increase distribution on platforms that USAGM knows audiences are using – FM, satellite and broadcast television, and mobile devices – continuing migration away from legacy platforms that no longer effectively reach audiences.
- Expand reach and engagement on digital platforms, including new streaming and over-the-top platforms.
- Find creative ways to penetrate closed societies, through flash drives, DVDs, and other alternative delivery means.
- Expand local distribution through affiliation with strong local television and FM radio stations and digital platforms and, where possible, installation of FM transmitters.
- Draw on research and other inputs to tailor format and presentation styles to audience needs and media usage habits, creating content that can break through ever-increasing clutter.
- Exploit the falling cost of video production to support growing audience appetite for television and video by updating USAGM broadcasting facilities.

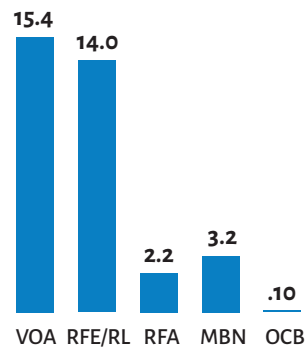
# Impact Performance Goal Overview

## 4.1

**Increase web traffic**

### WEEKLY WEB AND MOBILE VISITS

*in millions*



## 4.2

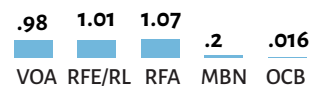
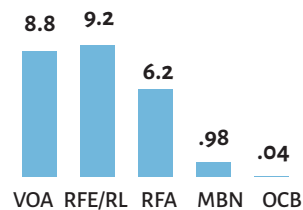
**Increase audience interaction via social media**

### DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

*in millions*

Digital Reactions  
(Likes/Hearts) on Facebook, Twitter,  
YouTube & Instagram

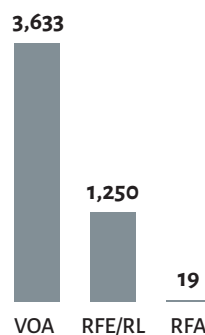
Select Digital Engagements  
(Comments/Shares) on Facebook, Twitter,  
YouTube & Instagram



## 4.3

**Build strong affiliate relationships**

### AFFILIATES



#### IMPACT OBJECTIVE 4

### Impact Performance Goal 4.1: Increase web traffic

Average weekly visits to web and mobile sites	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
VOA	8,810,700	8,850,000	9,383,700	10,832,000	11,048,600	15,352,700
RFE/RL	8,464,600	9,751,200	10,990,200	14,466,500	15,189,800	14,040,700
RFA	901,200	1,010,900	1,267,000	1,468,100	1,556,200	2,184,300
MBN	1,092,400	854,500	1,028,100	3,076,900	3,230,700	3,156,400
OCB	172,500	142,600	136,100	163,900	172,100	103,000

**Note:**

- Data in the chart above should be compared across years and not across broadcasters, in part because broadcasters are measuring different numbers of web and mobile sites and languages, ranging from one to over 40.

#### IMPACT INDICATOR:

##### Average weekly visitors:

This indicator measures the number of visits to USAGM websites over a 52-week period and creates an average based on 52 weeks of data coinciding with the fiscal year. Average weekly visits are derived from online analytic data tracked in Adobe Analytics. Unlike measured weekly audience reported above, average weekly visits to websites are not unduplicated, meaning one individual could account for multiple visits.

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

<b>VOA</b>	<b>Target: 11,048,600</b>	<b>Actual: 15,352,700</b>
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VOA's web and mobile traffic exceeded its target set for FY 2021, and experienced an increase of nearly four and a half million weekly visits from FY 2020.

<b>RFE/RL</b>	<b>Target: 15,189,800</b>	<b>Actual: 14,040,700</b>
---------------	---------------------------	---------------------------

RFE/RL's web and mobile traffic missed the target set for FY 2021.

<b>RFA</b>	<b>Target: 1,556,200</b>	<b>Actual: 2,184,300</b>
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RFA's web and mobile traffic exceeded its FY 2021 target with a 49 percent increase over FY 2020 traffic. RFA saw an uptick in visits and in visits from known proxy servers following the military takeover of the government in Burma in February 2021.

<b>MBN</b>	<b>Target: 3,230,700</b>	<b>Actual: 3,156,400</b>
------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

MBN's weekly web and mobile traffic in FY 2021 increased almost 3 percent from FY 2020 but fell short of the targeted growth. MBN did not meet its target due to unexpected COVID-related staffing disruptions and problems with the Content Management System for which MBN currently is replacing the service provider.

<b>OCB</b>	<b>Target: 172,100</b>	<b>Actual: 103,000</b>
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OCB's web and mobile traffic decreased from FY 2020 and did not meet the target set for FY 2021. Several factors contributed to this decline, including reduced staff dedicated to digital/social media, budget reductions, de-emphasis of digital content by previous management, and challenges tracking use of circumvention tools during internet shutdowns. Despite lower traffic overall, traffic to OCB's website originating from Cuba increased from FY 2020 to FY 2021 and spiked considerably during the protests in July. OCB has now pivoted to focus on web and social media and uses circumvention tools to help audiences access blocked content.

#### IMPACT OBJECTIVE 4

### Impact Performance Goal 4.2: Increase audience interaction via social media

Average weekly digital reactions <sup>1</sup>	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
VOA	4,056,300	4,218,600	8,804,600
RFE/RL	1,897,000	1,991,900	9,177,900
RFA	2,381,600	3,572,400	6,149,400
MBN	796,000	875,600	984,300
OCB	49,800	52,300	41,700

<sup>1</sup>This was reported for the first time in FY 2020. Actuals are not available for FY 2017-2019.

#### IMPACT INDICATOR:

##### Digital Reactions:

This indicator measures the weekly average number of reactions from social media accounts on measurable platforms, currently Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. Digital reactions include: all reactions on Facebook, hearts on Twitter and Instagram, and likes and dislikes on YouTube. These reactions are tracked through online analytics by a third party vendor (Emplifi, formerly known as Socialbakers).

#### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

<b>VOA</b>	<b>Target: 4,218,600</b>	<b>Actual: 8,804,600</b>
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VOA reactions on social media more than doubled the target set for FY 2021, with an increase of 109 percent from FY 2020. A significant portion of the increase came from Instagram reactions, which rose 488 percent, as well as Facebook reactions, which rose 77 percent.



**RFE/RL** **Target: 1,991,900** **Actual: 9,177,900**

Reactions to RFE/RL content on social media accounts increased substantially in FY 2021. RFE/RL social media engagement grew substantially to 9.2 million, rising 361 percent compared to the previous year. Instagram contributed significantly to this growth, with an increase of over 400 percent from FY 2020.

**RFA** **Target: 3,572,400** **Actual: 6,149,400**

RFA social media reactions surpassed the target set for FY 2021, with an increase of 109 percent from FY 2020. RFA's coverage of the violent military takeover of Burma's democratically-elected government and its aftermath drove a surge in reactions to content on its social media pages in FY 2021.

**MBN** **Target: 875,600** **Actual: 984,300**

MBN social media reactions surpassed the target set for FY 2021, with an increase of 12 percent from FY 2020.

**OCB** **Target: 52,300** **Actual: 41,700**

In FY 2021, OCB social media reactions decreased and missed the target by 20 percent. Factors contributing to this decline included: reduced staff dedicated to digital/social media, budget reductions, de-emphasis of digital content by previous management, and challenges tracking use of circumvention tools during internet shutdowns. OCB's social media pages registered considerable increases in digital reactions during the protests in July.

Average weekly select digital engagement actions <sup>1</sup>	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
VOA	831,200	864,400	988,700
RFE/RL	566,600	594,900	1,013,500
RFA	542,900	814,400	1,074,200
MBN	222,600	244,900	180,400
OCB	23,000	24,200	16,300

<sup>1</sup>This was reported for the first time in FY 2020. Actuals are not available for FY 2017-2019.

## IMPACT INDICATOR:

### Select Digital Engagement Actions:

This indicator measures the weekly average number of select engagement actions on measurable platforms, currently Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. Select engagement actions include: comments and shares on Facebook, comments on YouTube and Instagram, and retweets and replies on Twitter. These actions are tracked through online analytics by a third party vendor (Emplifi, formerly known as Socialbakers).

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

VOA	Target: 864,400	Actual: 988,700
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VOA social media engagement exceeded the target set for FY 2021, with an increase of 14 percent from FY 2020.

RFE/RL	Target: 594,900	Actual: 1,013,500
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Engagement with RFE/RL content posted to the social media accounts increased substantially in FY 2021. RFE/RL social media engagement rose 70 percent compared to the previous year, fueled in part by a 60 percent increase in YouTube comments.

RFA	Target: 814,400	Actual: 1,074,200
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RFA exceeded its social media engagement target by 32 percent. Retweets of RFA increased 89 percent compared to the previous year, driven largely by the Burmese service.

MBN	Target: 244,900	Actual: 180,400
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In FY 2021, MBN digital engagement actions missed the target by 26 percent. MBN missed its target in part due to unexpected COVID-related staffing disruptions as well as staffing shortages that have limited the level of community management. Because digital engagement actions are aggregates, they obscure significant improvements from FY 2020 for Irfaasawtak, Alhurra, and Maghreb Voices on Instagram and for Irfaasawtak on Facebook.

**OCB****Target: 24,200****Actual: 16,300**

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In FY 2021, OCB social media engagement missed the target by 33 percent. Factors contributing to this decline included: reduced staff dedicated to digital/social media, budget reductions, de-emphasis of digital content by previous management, and challenges tracking use of circumvention tools during internet shutdowns. OCB's social media pages registered considerable increases in engagement during the protests in July.

## IMPACT OBJECTIVE 4

### Impact Performance Goal 4.3: Build strong affiliate relationships

Number of affiliations (broadcast, online, and mobile)	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
USAGM <sup>1</sup>	NA	NA	3,729	4,174	4,180	4,321
VOA <sup>2</sup>	2,411	2,247	3,151	3,523	3,530	3,633
RFE/RL	798	777	1,140	1,228	1,230	1,250
RFA	7	11	10	11	11	19

<sup>1</sup> USAGM reported a consolidated number of affiliations for the first time in FY 2019. This number is unduplicated, meaning that a station or outlet is counted only once, even if it retransmits content from more than one USAGM network. For this reason, the total number of USAGM affiliations is lower than the sum of the individual network affiliations.

<sup>2</sup> The FY 2019 Actual for VOA presented here includes previously unreported stations or outlets that also retransmit RFE/RL or RFA content. In FY 2019, the number of USAGM affiliates that retransmitted only VOA content was 2,586, as reported in the PAR. Going forward, USAGM will report the full number of VOA affiliations, bringing it in line with the other networks.

#### IMPACT INDICATOR:

##### Affiliations

Affiliates – broadcast stations and digital platforms that carry USAGM content – are a primary intermediary between USAGM networks and audiences. Counting the number of affiliates offers a measure of how many stations distribute USAGM content. As shortwave usage wanes in parts of the world, affiliations with local medium wave, FM radio, broadcast television, and satellite stations have grown in importance. With the growth of digital and mobile technology, there are new forms of affiliations, including online and mobile. The affiliation indicator counts all partnered radio and television stations, including broadcast relay stations, as well as online content delivery platforms, that regularly retransmit content from the USAGM networks.

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

USAGM Affiliates	Target: 4,180	Actual: 4,321
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With 4,321 USAGM affiliates, USAGM exceeded its target of 4,180 affiliations in FY 2021.

VOA Affiliates	Target: 3,530	Actual: 3,633
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With 3,633 VOA affiliates, USAGM exceeded its target of 3,530 affiliations in FY 2021.

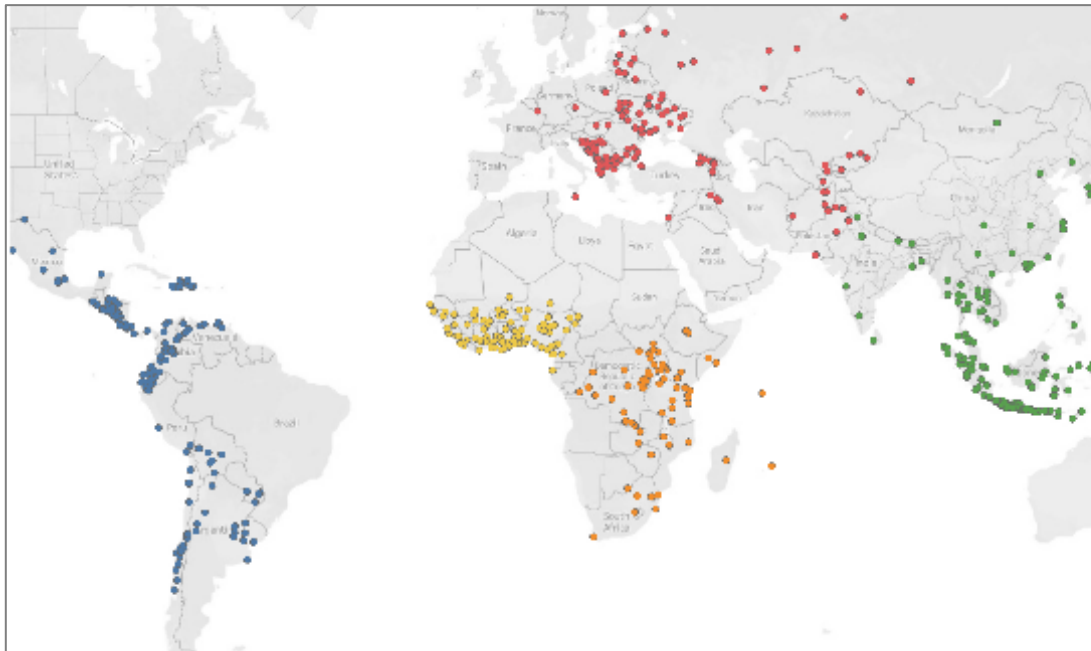
RFE/RL Affiliates	Target: 1,230	Actual: 1,250
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With 1,250 RFE/RL affiliates, USAGM exceeded its target of 1,230 affiliations in FY 2021.

RFA Affiliates	Target: 11	Actual: 19
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With 19 RFA affiliates, USAGM exceeded its affiliate target of 11 affiliations in FY 2021.

## MAP OF USAGM AFFILIATES BY REGION



#### A CLOSER LOOK:

## Shifting platforms to respond to changing audience preferences



*OCB has adopted a digital-first strategy for Cuba. (USAGM)*

USAGM determined that over-the-air television (OTA) is not an effective broadcast platform due to poor satellite reception and limited equipment availability inside Cuba. Traditional OTA broadcasts were eliminated and transitioned to the new Office of Cuba (OCB) “streaming audio-visual platform” to focus on expanding digital viewership and audience engagement. As connectivity has grown in Cuba and the use of mobile devices proliferates, OCB’s content has focused on a Digital First strategy. Circumvention tools such as Psiphon, have been instrumental in reaching the Cuban audience. Following the days of the protests on July 11, Psiphon reported 1.5 million daily users and provided internet access to 2.8 million Cubans on the island. During FY 2021, OCB has also embarked on initial testing of new shortwave transmission methodologies to include “Radiogram,” a technology that provides audio, text, and graphics delivery over the conventional radio medium, as well as the more enhanced and cost-effective “digital radio” platform, Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM).

As audiences have migrated away from shortwave and medium wave radio to FM radio, television, and digital platforms, USAGM seeks to meet them on those platforms. In FY 2021, VOA discontinued its SW and MW radio transmissions in Bangla, focusing instead on content delivery via affiliates and the growing opportunities afforded by digital platforms such as social media and the VOA mobile app.

# Using alternative, creative ways to deliver content

In FY 2021, USAGM networks continued experimenting with and utilizing new platforms and formats to deliver content to audiences around the world.

**DOCUMENTARIES** Despite its “foreign agent” designation by the Russian government, Current Time has found success with distributing documentaries, both in person and online. Multiple outlets expressed interest in broadcasting a Current Time-commissioned documentary, *The Russian Way*, which premiered in June in Moscow’s Karo October theater. When asked about Current Time’s role in the project, given its “foreign agent” status, filmmaker Tatiana Soboleva explained during the post-screening discussion that “no other non-governmental organizations and institutions [financially] support documentaries in Russia.”



*Filmmaker Tatiana Soboleva returns to her native village after working abroad for many years in the documentary *The Russian Way*. (Current Time)*

The Current Time Documentary channel set a new traffic record on YouTube: 13.7 million views in December 2020, representing a 43-percent increase in recorded viewership over the previous month. One of the popular programs was about a settlement close to the site of a mysterious 1908 Tunguska meteor strike in Siberia, and a second focused on the difficult living conditions faced by Russians who live in the Krasnoyarsk territory near Norilsk, the formerly closed industrial city.

**TELEGRAM** The RFE/RL Belarus Service produced a short feature video, *Courtyard Revolutions*, about the popularity of neighborhood Telegram chats and related street gatherings. Every day in dozens of Minsk neighborhoods, locals have started to use these “courtyard chats” to get acquainted, organize protest actions, and support each other. Meanwhile, subscribers to the Belarus Service’s



channel on Telegram – an increasingly critical platform as internet disruptions continue – approached 100,000.

**PODCASTS** In 2021, MBN tapped into the booming medium of podcasting to expand reach and connect with new audiences, particularly women and younger professionals. As the world was dealing with the physical and psychological impact of COVID, MBN's podcast *Chapters* combined the art of audio diaries, original sound design, and lyrical writing to convey the experiences that an MBN producer went through during the first year of the pandemic.

## Impact Objective 5:

### Serve as an authoritative source of information on U.S. news, policy, and society

Representing America and presenting and discussing U.S. policy are legislated mandates for the agency and, thus, constitute mission imperatives. Carrying them out requires sensitivity and creativity. Currents of anti-Americanism still run strong in some parts of the world, necessitating deft outreach that stresses dialogue, not monologue. The way people interact with media today, with emphasis on interaction, further affirms this approach. At the same time, America's still-dominant role on the global stage makes it a focal point of international attention, and its national language is the one that tens of millions of people around the world seek to learn. VOA, in particular, is uniquely mandated and positioned to leverage these advantages to connect with diverse international audiences, serving as a U.S. news bureau for affiliate partners and providing English-learning programming.

USAGM will:

- Serve as a U.S. bureau for media outlets across the world that wish to engage with us for news, analysis, and perspectives from the United States – on the model that has succeeded in Ukraine, Latin America, Nigeria, Indonesia, and elsewhere.
- Portray the breadth and diversity of the American experience, with particular attention to diaspora communities and Americans outside of big cities.
- Emphasize English learning as a vehicle for positive audience engagement and interaction as well as information on American society and culture.
- Meet the global interest in American politics with in-depth coverage and analysis of national elections and coverage of other political events to impart the news and to elucidate the democratic process, with stories localized to make them interesting to specific target regions.
- Satisfy the world's growing appetite for learning English through television and radio programs, online instruction, printed instructional materials, and innovative short-form videos designed for social media.

## IMPACT OBJECTIVE 5

### Impact Performance Goal 5.1: Provide programming that increases audiences' understanding of the United States

Understanding of American society – percentage of weekly audience who report that the broadcasts have increased their understanding of American society somewhat or a great deal	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
VOA	67	62	56	56	58	55
MBN	44	42	44	38	50	54
OCB	85	85	85	85	85	85

Understanding of U.S. foreign policy – percentage of weekly audience who report that the broadcasts have increased their understanding of U.S. foreign policy somewhat or a great deal	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
VOA	68	60	54	53	55	53
MBN	43	42	44	47	55	50
OCB	89	89	89	89	90	89

#### IMPACT INDICATORS:

##### Understanding of American Society:

Representative surveys ask weekly listeners/viewers/online users of a USAGM network's broadcasts in a particular language to report whether the broadcasts have "increased their understanding of American society." The answers are registered on a four-point scale: "a great deal," "somewhat," "very little," or "not at all." The understanding indicator is a weighted average, by audience size, of the percentage of those answering the question in the survey (excluding those who did not respond or did not know) who chose "a great deal" or "somewhat."

## Understanding of U.S. Foreign Policy:

Representative surveys ask weekly listeners/viewers/online users of a USAGM network's broadcasts in a particular language to report whether the broadcasts have "increased their understanding of U.S. foreign policy." The answers are registered on a four-point scale: "a great deal," "somewhat," "very little," or "not at all." The understanding indicator is a weighted average, by audience size, of the percentage of those answering the question in the survey (excluding those who did not respond or did not know) who chose "a great deal" or "somewhat."

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

### Understanding of American Society

#### VOA

**Target: 58**

**Actual: 55**

VOA set an ambitious target score for understanding of American society in FY 2021 – 58 percent – and missed it by three points with a score of 55, just one point lower than FY 2020. Although VOA measured its largest audience ever in 2021, the score for understanding of American society is still driven significantly by the very large audience in Mexico, last measured in 2018 during very tense relations at the border between the two countries.

#### MBN

**Target: 50**

**Actual: 54**

MBN's score for understanding of American society was above target. This likely reflects, in part, MBN's significantly increased emphasis on programming related to the United States in FY 2021. Understanding of American society in Iraq, MBN's largest market, was 52.3 percent for Alhurra. Understanding was higher among Moroccans (65.6 percent), and Palestinians (65.9 percent).

#### OCB

**Target: 85**

**Actual: 85**

USAGM did not commission a survey in Cuba in FY 2021, so OCB's understanding of American society score remains unchanged in FY 2021.

## Understanding of U.S. Foreign Policy

### VOA

Target: 55

Actual: 53

VOA missed its target score for increasing understanding of U.S. foreign policy by two points, but the score of 53 is identical to FY 2020. It is difficult to know whether this represents a plateau in the downward trend begun in FY 2017, since the vast majority of new data in 2021 was collected in short omnibus surveys that could not include this metric. The relatively low score among the massive audience in Mexico (45 percent), measured in 2019, remains a significant driver of lower scores, given the large size of the audience there.

### MBN

Target: 55

Actual: 50

MBN's score for understanding of U.S. foreign policy was below target, but still the highest since 2017. The weighted average is heavily affected by Iraq, MBN's largest market, where 43.9 percent of past week Alhurra viewers say the channel increased their understanding of the United States.

### OCB

Target: 90

Actual: 89

USAGM did not commission a survey in Cuba in FY 2021, so OCB's understanding of U.S. foreign policy score remains unchanged in FY 2021.

## IMPACT OBJECTIVE 5

### Impact Performance Goal 5.2: Provide exceptional news and information

Uniqueness Percentage of weekly audience reporting that broadcaster presents information they cannot get from other media	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
VOA	29	31	28	28	29	29

#### IMPACT INDICATORS:

##### Uniqueness

This indicator is determined by a question in representative surveys asking past week listeners/viewers/online users of any language how much of the information provided by the entity is also available from other sources on the radio, television, or internet. The answers are registered on a four-point scale: “All of it is available elsewhere,” “Some of it is available elsewhere,” “Very little of it is available elsewhere,” or “None of it is available elsewhere.” The unique information indicator is a weighted average, by audience size, of the percentage of those answering the question in the survey who chose “very little” or “none.”

#### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

##### Uniqueness

##### VOA

**Target: 29**

**Actual: 29**

VOA met its target score for uniqueness, which is one point higher than its FY 2020 score.

## A CLOSER LOOK:

# Successful deployment of the U.S. bureau model

Many of VOA's language services act as U.S. bureaus for their affiliate partners, providing news and analysis of major developments in the United States that can be inserted directly into affiliate news programming. Pursuant to its Charter, VOA continues to explain the U.S. political process to the world, for example, by supplying media outlets around the world coverage of this past year's U.S. presidential election and inauguration.



*VOA Russian correspondent files from the U.S. Capitol. (VOA)*

More than 100 television channels, including top-rated national networks in Ukraine, Albania, Armenia, Bosnia, Georgia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia, relied exclusively on the U.S. election coverage provided by VOA journalists who fulfilled more than 500 requests for content. During the week of

November 3, 2020 alone, VOA's Eurasia Division services responded to more than 500 requests for content from affiliates.

Media partners in Latin America continue to rely on VOA Spanish for breaking news, the latest top stories on politics, business, technology, health, immigration, arts and culture, as well as the role of diaspora communities in the United States. The Service expanded its presence in the U.S. with additional reporters in Los Angeles, New York, Houston, and Miami, as well as along the US-Mexican border, in addition to



*VOA Spanish covers the U.S. Presidential Election for affiliates in Latin America. (VOA)*

Washington D.C. On a daily basis, reporters in the U.S. go live into newscasts and news programs in the region and prepare dozens of reports on the latest news and information. This past year, the U.S. election, immigration crisis, and the pandemic have been daily topics of content generated by the Spanish Service for its more than 800 media partners. The Director of International News Azteca Television, Mexico stated that “VOA offers unique contextual coverage from the capital of the United States. For the Mexican audience, this is vital information and critical for our daily operation. In special coverage such as elections and immigration, we simply could not offer our audiences complete coverage without the Voice of America.”



## A CLOSER LOOK:

# Exceptional and unique coverage of important U.S. news stories

VOA continued to cover U.S. issues of interest to foreign audiences and provide programming that tells America's story. It explains the United States to international audiences in terms that are relevant and relatable. All VOA languages provided thorough coverage of the U.S. Presidential race and its tangled aftermath. World audience interest was high, and VOA focused on explaining the twists and turns required to ensure that the election was fair and free, as U.S. law guarantees.



*Omar Fateh, the son of Somali immigrants, was elected to the Minnesota State Senate. (VOA)*

VOA's Africa Division added a dimension to its coverage of the election. It profiled diaspora candidates elected to office in the November elections. This multimedia project told America's story by visiting with the newly-elected officials and their constituents, including Minnesota State Representative Esther Agbaje

(whose parents are Nigerian immigrants), Wisconsin State Assemblyman Samba Baldeh (who is from Gambia), New York State Senator Samra Brouk (whose father is an Ethiopian refugee), Minnesota State Senator Omar Fateh (whose parents are Somali immigrants), Washington D.C. shadow delegate Oye Owowela (whose parents are Nigerian immigrants) and Colorado State Representative Naquetta Ricks (who is from Liberia).

VOA also thoroughly covers the U.S. angles of international stories. For example, VOA's Russian and Ukrainian Services provided comprehensive coverage of the political crisis in Belarus, offering American official and expert perspectives, reporting on significant Belarusian diaspora protests in major U.S. cities, and providing a platform for exiled Belarusian journalists to speak about pressures they are facing. VOA interviewed key members of the Congressional Belarusian Caucus,

who called for stronger Western sanctions against Alexander Lukashenko, and other newsmakers – most notably, Belarusian opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya right after her meeting with President Joe Biden at the White House in August.



*Alhurra delivered comprehensive coverage of the U.S. Presidential Election to audiences across the Middle East. (MBN)*

MBN is poised to represent America like no other across its broadcast region. FY 2021 highlights of MBN's coverage of America, Americans and U.S. policy began with extraordinary coverage of America's Presidential election. MBN's initial coverage of the 2020 elections spanned over forty hours continuously across all media, including a weekly wrap-up show that ran until the final election results were ultimately declared. MBN correspondents in North Carolina, California, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Florida, Virginia, and at the White House reported regularly to provide voter reactions throughout the non-stop coverage, which included: 145 reports and packages, 129 website videos, 70 guests and analysts, an interactive U.S. map on the website with live polling results, 60 live reports on Facebook and twitter, 160 web articles, 30 digital explainer videos, and four augmented reality explainer graphics.

## Impact Objective 6:

### Serve as a surrogate news operation, delivering information otherwise not available in local markets

In environments where state-run media are dominant and independent media are either not allowed or not fully established, the USAGM networks, particularly RFE/RL and RFA, often play a surrogate role, acting as local media outlets would if they were free to operate. In this role, the networks emphasize domestic news for their geographically-defined audiences and cover developments specific to defined target markets, especially in countries without a free press or in transition. They focus on local news events not covered in state-controlled domestic media, as well as other sensitive topics, including religion, science, and locally-banned literature and music. They give voice to dissidents and opposition movements while maintaining balanced coverage and serve as platforms for a range of opinions and voices from these countries.

USAGM will:

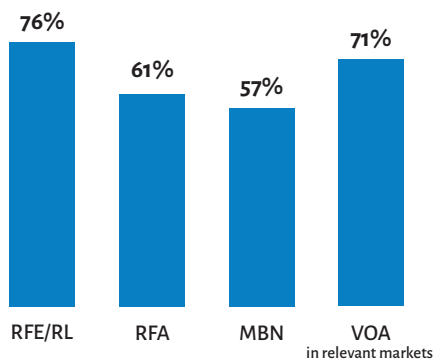
- Build reliable and responsive networks of local stringers across target regions.
- Where possible, maintain an on-the-ground bureau presence to report local news from a local perspective.
- Where in-country access is limited, cultivate networks of trusted contributors and closely monitor official and alternative media.
- Use social media and other interactive tools to gather information from closed societies, amplifying voices of those struggling for free expression.
- Provide platforms for free expression of various viewpoints and work to help people bridge traditional divides, including class, ethnicity, religion, etc.

# Impact Performance Goal Overview

## 6.1

**Provide programming that increases audiences' understanding of current events in target countries**

### PROGRAMMING PROVIDES UNDERSTANDING OF CURRENT EVENTS IN TARGET COUNTRIES

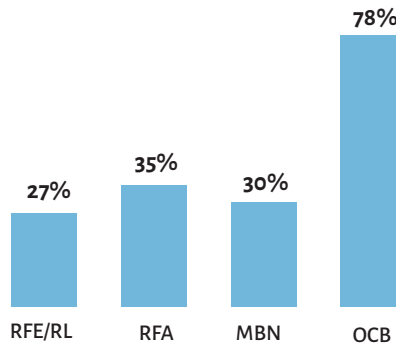


(% of weekly audience)

## 6.2

**Provide exceptional news and information**

### PROGRAMMING PROVIDES EXCEPTIONAL NEWS AND INFORMATION



(% of weekly audience)

## IMPACT OBJECTIVE 6

### Impact Performance Goal 6.1: Provide programming that increases audiences' understanding of current events in target countries

Understanding of current events in target country – percentage of weekly audience who report that the broadcasts have increased their understanding of current events in the target country somewhat or a great deal	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
VOA in relevant markets	NA	NA	NA	72	72	71
RFE/RL	83	77	75	75	76	76
RFA	86	83	83	78	62	61
MBN	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	57
OCB	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

#### Note:

This was a new measure in FY 2018. Actuals are only available for a small number of language services for FY 2017-2020. There is no data to report for OCB.

#### IMPACT INDICATORS:

##### Understanding of current events in target country

This indicator is determined by a question in representative surveys asking past week listeners/viewers/online users of [language] whether the broadcasts have “increased their understanding of current events in [target country].” The answers are registered on a four-point scale: “a great deal,” “somewhat,” “very little,” or “not at all.” The understanding indicator is a weighted average, by audience size, of the percentage of those answering the question in the survey (excluding those who did not respond or did not know) who chose “a great deal” or “somewhat.”

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

### VOA

Target: 72

Actual: 71

VOA has scores from few markets for this new metric, and it will take several years to complete surveys to cover enough markets to establish anything like a baseline or set a realistic target. Among those markets included in the FY 2020 score, Ukraine scored the highest, with 86 percent of the weekly audience claiming greater understanding of current events in their own country due to VOA content. In FY 2021, an omnibus in Ukraine, the data from which replaced data used in 2020, was unable to ask about understanding of current events in Ukraine, which reduced the overall VOA score.

### RFE/RL

Target: 76

Actual: 76

Based on data from 15 countries and regions, RFE/RL's score regarding understanding of current events in the target country in FY 2021 was 76 percent, meeting its target. RFE/RL continues to increase the understanding of current events in the target area through its surrogate broadcasting among a significant portion of its audience with three in four weekly listeners, viewers, or online users reporting that its programs increased their understanding of current events in the target area.

### RFA

Target: 62

Actual: 61

RFA's score for understanding of current events in the target country is based entirely on data from Cambodia, where figures were significantly lower than in past cycles. This relatively low figure was perhaps influenced by fear of openly expressing support for RFA, which Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen has denounced and attempted to discredit with increasing ferocity. The relevant question was not included in the most recent survey module in Burma, where data had been collected for this metric in past surveys.

### MBN

Target: NA

Actual: 57

MBN's performance on this indicator is based on data in Iraq and Saudi Arabia only. Performance in Saudi Arabia was significantly higher at 72.7 percent, while performance in Iraq was lower at 45.4 percent.

## A CLOSER LOOK:

# Coverage of important local news stories that other media are not covering

**ON-THE-GROUND ADVANTAGE** With local on-the-ground reporters across its coverage region, RFE/RL provides audiences unique local coverage of major events. In Belarus, as the country's citizens struggle and protest for democratic change, RFE/RL in-country reporters provided audiences exclusive live footage from street demonstrations and in-depth reporting on police repression of ordinary citizens. During the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, RFE/RL showed both sides of the story via its reporting networks in both Armenia and Azerbaijan, allowing audiences to see the objective truth to the difficult situation. In Afghanistan and the border regions of Pakistan, local reporters braved extreme risks to report on the human consequences of the Taliban resurgence.

RFE/RL differentiates itself from other news outlets by focusing not just on news in Russia's major cities but also on stories spanning the needs and interests of citizens across the country's vast expanse. Current Time's feature series *Person On The Map* documented how an influx of oil money led to a



*A scene from the feature series Person on the Map.  
(Current Time)*

move toward camel farming in one village near the Volga River. Audience comments questioned why Russia's mainstream TV doesn't show such stories, which show hardworking people managing to overcome hardship. The RFE/RL Tatar-Bashkir Service's coverage of clashes between environmental activists and workers in Bashkortostan received a million total views. RFE/RL was the only media on site when the clashes against exploitation of natural resources happened.

**MIGRANT WORKERS** RFA Khmer and Lao services have both reported extensively on the plight of Cambodian and Lao migrant workers in Thailand who have



struggled to access medical care during the COVID-19 pandemic – falling through the cracks of Thai health system that has struggled to cope. These are stories that media in their home countries rarely cover. RFA reporters have sought out migrant families in Bangkok, like a pregnant Lao woman who contracted COVID, and also covered the efforts of civil society groups to help them. RFA Khmer has reported on how Cambodia's poorest are struggling to survive inside Cambodia as well, scavenging trash and growing crops they cannot find a market for – video stories that would not be aired on government-dominated TV.

**HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN NORTH AFRICA** As protesters took to the streets of Tunisia calling for economic and political reforms, Alhurra was the only pan-Arab network to have exclusive footage of the clashes between protesters and authorities in the western city of Subaytlah. The fighting was sparked after a man was killed and his business destroyed by authorities. Alhurra also had analysis from Tunisian experts who addressed the similarities between these protests and the Arab Spring. In Morocco, MaghrebVoices.com covered Amnesty International's calls for the unconditional release of human rights defender Maati Monjib, who was imprisoned for his advocacy work.



## IMPACT OBJECTIVE 6

### Impact Performance Goal 6.2: Provide exceptional news and information

Uniqueness Percentage of weekly audience reporting that broadcaster presents information they cannot get from other media	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
RFE/RL	22	25	26	27	27	27
RFA	NA	40	40	38	36	35
MBN	20	32	29	30	40	30
OCB	78	78	78	78	80	78

#### IMPACT INDICATORS:

##### Uniqueness

This indicator is determined by a question in representative surveys asking past week listeners/viewers/online users of any language how much of the information provided by the entity is also available from other sources on the radio, TV, or internet. The answers are registered on a four-point scale: “All of it is available elsewhere,” “Some of it is available elsewhere,” “Very little of it is available elsewhere,” or “None of it is available elsewhere.” The unique information indicator is a weighted average, by audience size, of the percentage of those answering the question in the survey who chose “very little” or “none.”

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

### Uniqueness

<b>RFE/RL</b>	<b>Target: 27</b>	<b>Actual: 27</b>
<p>RFE/RL’s uniqueness score of 27 percent met the target of 27 percent. RFE/RL continues to provide unique information to a significant proportion of its audience with one-quarter of weekly listeners, viewers, or online users reporting that “very little” or “none” of the information provided by RFE/RL is available elsewhere.</p>		
<b>RFA</b>	<b>Target: 36</b>	<b>Actual: 35</b>
<p>RFA’s uniqueness score narrowly missed its target. This score is based on data from Cambodia only and these results were lower than anticipated.</p>		
<b>MBN</b>	<b>Target: 40</b>	<b>Actual: 30</b>
<p>MBN’s uniqueness score is lower than targeted, but consistent with previous years. Providing content audiences find unique traditionally has been a significant challenge in the Arab world where audiences have access to hundreds of well-funded local and international TV and radio stations and digital media sources. A 2016 USAGM-MBN funded content analysis of Alhurra competitors also found that while many outlets cover the same general topics as Alhurra, they do not provide as much depth, are more critical of the United States, and/or do not cover issues as objectively as Alhurra.</p>		
<b>OCB</b>	<b>Target: 80</b>	<b>Actual: 78</b>
<p>USAGM did not commission a survey in Cuba in FY 2021, so OCB’s uniqueness score remains unchanged in FY 2021.</p>		

## Impact Objective 7:

### Engage local media and empower citizen information gathering and exchange

Local media affiliates are the primary means through which USAGM networks now reach their target audiences in most markets. However, the relationship with these media partners is about much more than just content delivery. By developing these media networks and connecting our affiliates to one another, USAGM fosters rich, open-media ecosystems. USAGM leads by example in its journalistic practices, but it also increasingly partners with affiliates on content co-creation, sometimes even participating in daily editorial meetings. USAGM also provides training to indigenous media on topics ranging from journalistic principles to business practices. In a similar way, USAGM works to connect audiences to one another, and to foster the free flow of information, often through a wide array of web, mobile, and social media tools. These tools have made media personal, moving the power from centralized broadcasters to a new class of bloggers, activists, videographers, and a content-generating public. They are using media not only to tell their stories on a digital world stage, but also to connect with one another to chart the future of their communities and build new forms of civil society.

USAGM will:

- Deepen relationships with key local media affiliates, providing editorial guidance, training and technical assistance, and other resources to strengthen local, independent media sectors.
- Nurture citizen journalism and channel user-generated content from inside repressive states.
- Link citizens within repressive societies to one another and to external audiences through social media networks.
- Facilitate dialogue across religious, national, and ethnic divides.

# Impact Performance Goal Overview

## 7.1

### Increase engagement with local media outlets

Number of USAGM affiliates  
that air custom or  
interactive segments

109

Number of weekly downloads  
from affiliate content  
distribution portal, Direct

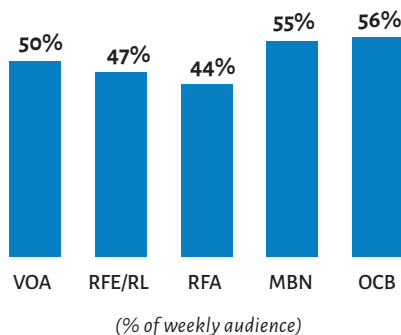
4,354

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## 7.2

### Increase sharing of USAGM programming

Percentage of weekly audience  
who shared something  
heard/read/seen on broadcaster weekly



## IMPACT OBJECTIVE 7

### Impact Performance Goal 7.1: Increase engagement with local media outlets.

	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
Number of USAGM affiliates with national reach that air custom or interactive segments during primetime <sup>1</sup>	50	60	68	NA	NA	NA
Number of USAGM radio and TV affiliates that serve multiple markets <sup>1</sup>	NA	NA	452	540	555	564
Number of USAGM affiliates that air custom or interactive segments <sup>1</sup>	NA	NA	80	99	105	109
Number of weekly downloads from affiliate content distribution portal, Direct	1,650	2,750	2,815	3,662	3,800	4,354

<sup>1</sup> In FY 2019, USAGM changed the performance metrics for this goal to emphasize affiliates that are multi-market, rather than national, and to focus on those who air custom or interactive segments.

#### IMPACT INDICATOR:

The indicators for increasing engagement with local media outlets include: the number of USAGM radio and television affiliates that serve multiple markets, the number of USAGM affiliates that air custom or interactive segments, and the average number of weekly downloads (audio, video, text, or photos) from Direct, the affiliate content distribution portal. USAGM is discontinuing use of the metric measuring the number of USAGM affiliates (radio or television) with national reach that air custom or interactive segments (also known as “bureau” reports, produced jointly with the USAGM networks) during primetime.

**ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:**

All of these affiliate engagement metrics in the chart above showed large increases and exceeded the targets set for FY 2021. The number of weekly downloads from USAGM Direct showed a 19 percent increase from last year, which can be attributed to a shift to online workflows as a result of COVID-19, as well as strong interest in coronavirus and election-related coverage. USAGM began the phased rollout of a new Direct platform this year, and expects continued growth in weekly downloads from this platform.

## A CLOSER LOOK:

# Substantive engagement with key local media affiliates



*USAGM and the Francisco de Paula Santander University (UFPS) in Colombia, organized an open forum on press freedom for 76 participants from Latin America. (USAGM)*

VOA Spanish partnered with Nicaragua's leading digital publication, La Prensa, to produce an on location three-part series about limited press freedoms, how citizens stay informed by word of mouth, and the tools used to brake government-imposed censorship. "As we celebrate World Press Freedom Day, it has been a great experience to work with VOA, sharing experiences and skills, reporting and producing stories on the challenges the media are facing," said Eduardo Enriquez, Managing Editor of La Prensa.

USAGM regional marketing staff facilitated the first election debate organized by the VOA Horn of Africa Service in partnership with its affiliate Ahadu TV on May 28 on the topic of building democratic institutions and pursuing political reforms in Ethiopia. This was the first time in Ethiopia's election history that an international media organization has been allowed to co-produce debates in the country. Participants in the first debate represented the four political parties with the largest number of nominees for the upcoming parliamentary and regional council elections.

Despite the pandemic, USAGM's Office of Business Development continued training journalists in an effort to increase reporting capacity around the world. In FY 2021, more than one thousand journalists were trained by USAGM on subjects and techniques including countering disinformation, investigative journalism, reporting on corruption, environmental journalism, anti-narcotics reporting, polio, and more. Trainings ranged from online webinars to major, multi-session in-person efforts.

For example, in a series of six workshops held over nine months, USAGM worked with VOA to conduct the most systematic effort in Uzbekistan's media history to raise skills, instill professionalism, and build trust between press and government. Forty-one journalists participated in two four-day workshops on Reporting Corruption

and Fact-checking in Samarkand and Tashkent. Trainees were a carefully selected group of Uzbek media professionals, invited based on skill levels and potential.

Akmal Burhanov, Director General of Uzbekistan's Anti-Corruption Agency said, "We are grateful for such a consistent and intensive training program that the USAGM has offered to Uzbek journalists throughout this year. As we boost measures against corruption, our county's journalists increasingly need your professional support and workshops. We want them to investigate corruption and expose fraud and financial crimes. We are taking unprecedented steps, and hope the Uzbek media will be better skilled and equipped to report on critical issues."



*Navbahor Imamova, Senior Editor from the VOA Uzbek Service works with participants at a data journalism for business reporting workshop held in Tashkent and Ferghana. (USAGM)*



## IMPACT OBJECTIVE 7

### Impact Performance Goal 7.2: Increase sharing of USAGM programming

Sharing – Percentage of weekly audience who shared something heard/read/seen on broadcaster weekly	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
VOA	45	46	49	49	50	50
RFE/RL	48	44	41	40	42	47
RFA	49	41	41	37	43	44
MBN	67	67	62	48	50	55
OCB	56	56	56	56	59	56

#### IMPACT INDICATOR:

##### Sharing of programming

This indicator is determined by a question in representative surveys asking weekly listeners/viewers/online users in any language how often they share news that they have heard, seen, or read from a USAGM network with friends or relatives, or with their social network. The answers are registered on a five-point range: “daily or most days per week,” “at least once a week,” “at least once a month,” “less than once a month,” or “never.” The sharing indicator is a weighted average, by audience size, of the percentage of those answering the question in the survey who chose “Daily or most days per week” or “At least once a week.”

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

### VOA

Target: 50

Actual: 50

VOA met its FY 2021 target for weekly sharing of its news by users, with now half of all its users (50 percent, a one point increase from FY 2020) reporting they share something they have seen or heard from VOA with their personal network. More and more VOA audiences around the world are consuming VOA on social media platforms, which clearly enhances the ability for them to share content.

### RFE/RL

Target: 42

Actual: 47

RFE/RL's score for weekly sharing of programming was 47 percent in FY 2021, significant exceeding its target of 42 percent. After declines in recent years, the figure for FY 2021 approaches the peak figure of 48 percent recorded in FY 2017. Although usage of Radio Farda declined in the most recent national survey of Iran, more weekly users of Radio Farda indicated regularly sharing programming than in the past.

### RFA

Target: 43

Actual: 44

RFA's score for weekly sharing of content was 44 in FY 2021, based entirely on data from Cambodia. Recent modules for other RFA target countries did not include the relevant question for this metric.

### MBN

Target: 50

Actual: 55

MBN's score for weekly sharing of programming is above target, although falls below weekly averages in previous years. Qualitative research in the Arab world indicates audiences in the region are reluctant to share information via digital media in part because of increased government controls and penalties for sharing what governments consider politically sensitive information.

### OCB

Target: 59

Actual: 56

USAGM did not commission a survey in Cuba in FY 2021, so OCB's sharing score remains unchanged in FY 2021.

## A CLOSER LOOK:

# Citizen journalism and user-generated content

USAGM networks use citizen journalists and user-generated content (UGC) to gather and present information from repressive environments and present diverse perspectives to their audiences.

**IRAN** VOA reporting from inside Iran highlighted high levels of public despair, frustration, and indifference toward any of the main political blocs competing for power in the country. VOA used more than 30 user-generated video reports from polling stations inside Iran to document low turnout. In September, VOA Persian used audio interviews recorded in secret and sent to VOA Persian by citizen journalists inside Iran to produce a 60-minute original documentary marking the first anniversary of the unlawful execution of Navid Afkari, the former champion wrestler and political activist. The documentary became a powerful exposé revealing the truth about the increasing use of death penalty in Iran as a political weapon against anti-government protesters and political dissidents.

**VIETNAM** RFA Vietnamese has become a go-to news outlet for Vietnamese viewers looking for unvarnished coverage of the country's COVID crisis – and the main source of information for RFA journalists has been citizens and their cell phones. Vietnam's government won plaudits for containing coronavirus infections in 2020, but during 2021 public anger has grown over the government's failure to secure enough vaccine and for its blunt efforts



*RFA Vietnamese has become a valued source of info on the COVID crisis using on the ground footage from citizens. (RFA)*

to enforce lockdowns. These failures have been documented in countless citizen videos that garner hundreds of thousands of views on a near-daily basis on the RFA Vietnamese Facebook feed. They show over-zealous police, chaos at hospitals, and frustration at authorities' failure to distribute adequate aid.

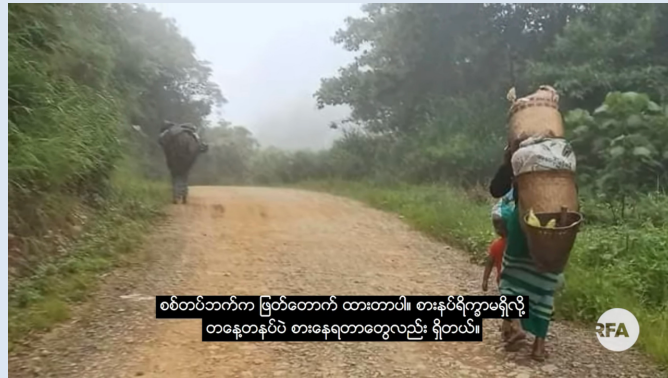
**CUBA** Citizen journalism played in key role in OCB's coverage of the July 11 protests. As thousands of Cubans went to the streets to demonstrate against the current conditions on the island, they provided cell phone footage of the peaceful marches to the world through their social media accounts. OCB also covered an independent feminist movement, La Red Femenina, on the nearly 30 crimes against women. These women act as citizen journalists providing information the government does not share.

## A CLOSER LOOK:

# USAGM-facilitated dialogue across religious, national, and ethnic divides

**BURMA** RFA Burmese has long broadcast weekly news segments in seven different ethnic minority languages but since 2020 it has been providing those segments in full video and with Burmese subtitles so they can be comprehended by a wider audience to help promote cross-cultural and cross-ethnic understanding. Since May

2021, RFA Burmese has also packaged those news segments into a weekly show that is webcast and broadcast on the joint satellite channel with VOA.



*The show RFA Ethnic is broadcast on the 24/7 news channel to Burma. (RFA)*

**AFGHANISTAN** RFE/RL gives a voice to religious minorities in Afghanistan. One of RFE/RL's strengths is its ability to cover the stories of ethnic and religious minorities in a professional yet empathetic way. In Afghanistan, Radio Azadi has been following the ongoing struggles of people in the Hindu and Sikh minorities – including how in 2020 a deadly attack by the extremist Islamic State group on a Sikh shrine in Kabul killed scores of civilians and forced some to flee to India.

VOA Afghan has held numerous anti-narcotic and anti-polio Town Halls in the major cities and provinces of Afghanistan. Guests from all walks of life have participated in the town halls, including high-ranking government officials, farmers, journalists, civil society activists, health workers, doctors, religious scholars, and tribal elders. These events have provided very rare opportunities for public and government officials to come together, discuss these issues and create an understanding on what needs to be done on these critical issues.

**MIDDLE EAST** MBN highlighted the challenges faced by religious minorities, across the region, including an Egyptian court that banned Jewish festivities. ElSaha.com reported on the debate within the impacted village and the discussion continued within the comments section on El Saha's Facebook page.

Iraq Today reported on the struggles of the Yazidis who are still subjected to human trafficking, nearly four years after ISIS was mostly eradicated from Iraq. Al Yawm (Today) discussed religious minorities around the world and what governments are doing to protect their rights. Sawa Iraq's Bi Karama (With Dignity) interviewed representatives of the Kaka'i community, to learn more about their calls to have the Iraqi constitution recognize their community of approximately 150,000 people.

## PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

### Mission:

To inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy

### Strategic Goals:

Expand freedom of information and expression

Communicate America's democratic experience and values

### Objectives:

Impact Objectives  
(see page 32)

Agility Objectives

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*USAGM's Strategic Goals are supported by Impact Objectives, which focus on performance on the mission, and Agility Objectives, which focus on the management of the agency.*

*Each objective is broken down into measurable performance goals. USAGM sets targets for these goals annually. Following is the five-year historical data for each performance goal, an explanation of the indicator and how it is measured, and a detailed analysis of the results.*

## AGILITY OBJECTIVES:

1	Run USAGM as a nimble, resilient, cost-effective, and state-of-the-art media enterprise	AGILITY OBJECTIVE 1	130
		PERFORMANCE GOALS:	
		1.1 Streamline program delivery	131
		Ability to nimbly react to a rapidly-changing environment	134
		1.2 Automate and streamline key business processes	135
		1.3 Leverage cloud services and other technologies to boost workforce effectiveness and efficiency	137
		1.4 Strengthen resilience and risk posture of the agency	139
		Resilience in the face of cyber threats	143
		1.5 Migrate to High Definition (HD) video production and transmission	144
2	Enhance strategic cooperation among USAGM networks and with support elements	AGILITY OBJECTIVE 2	146
		PERFORMANCE GOALS:	
		2.1 Increase opportunities for sharing content across USAGM language services and networks	148
		Original reporting shared across language services and networks	149
		2.2 Enhance working-level coordination among networks and with support offices	150
		Coordination and planning among networks and with support offices	152
		2.3 Ensure complementary coverage in markets served by more than one USAGM network	153
3	Enable greater impact and accountability through rigorous assessment and evaluation	AGILITY OBJECTIVE 3	154
		PERFORMANCE GOALS:	
		3.1 Strengthen research and evaluation program	155
		Modernization of USAGM research methods	156
		Pilot projects to bring research data and evaluation products to senior leaders and other key decision-makers	157
		3.2 Improve personnel evaluation processes	158
		3.3 Improve performance culture of the Agency	159
4	Foster employee engagement, development, and productivity	AGILITY OBJECTIVE 4	160
		PERFORMANCE GOALS:	
		4.1 Strengthen internal communications	161
		4.2 Improve employee training and development	163
		Employee training, development, and mentoring	164



## Agility Objective 1:

### Run USAGM as a nimble, resilient, cost-effective, and state-of-the-art media enterprise

By virtue of historical circumstance, today's USAGM is a complex amalgam of diverse media outlets and respective support organizations, operating under different legal and administrative frameworks. The result is an organization that has sometimes lacked the agility to operate in a rapidly evolving global media environment and the standardization that enables rational resource allocations. However, in recent years, the agency has begun a fundamental transformation in order to appropriately fulfill its charter and meet the challenges of growing geopolitical instability and substantial budgetary constraints.

USAGM will:

- Pursue an efficient and effective organizational structure.
- Enhance the agency's technological platforms and workflows, enabling it to continually adapt to global standards in content acquisition, management, and distribution, as well as audience consumption behaviors.
- Automate and streamline business processes and workflows.
- Employ cloud-based technologies to achieve nimbleness, resilience, and cost savings.
- Protect USAGM from persistent threats from state and non-state actors through enhancements to its cybersecurity posture.

## AGILITY OBJECTIVE 1

# Agility Performance Goal 1.1: Streamline program delivery

Transition to internet and fiber optic content distribution to stations and uplinks, migrating away from more costly satellite distribution	
FY 2017 Actual	50% of satellite-based distribution feeds transferred to terrestrial fiber.
FY 2018 Actual	<p>USAGM is in the process of transferring feeds and expects 75% of satellite based distribution feeds transferred to terrestrial circuits by Q3 FY 2019.</p> <p>50% of MPLS network transferred from Hub and Spoke to any-to-any mesh network.</p> <p>40% of contribution feeds are now leveraging public internet for Primary or Back-up.</p>
FY 2019 Actual	<p>100% of satellite-based distribution feeds converted to terrestrial fiber.</p> <p>75% of contribution feeds moved off satellite for either primary or secondary connections; costly satellite backups eliminated where possible.</p>
FY 2020 Actual	<p>100% of contribution feeds to Cohen Bldg. converted to terrestrial circuits.</p> <p>91% of DTH content migrated to DTH multiplex platforms housed with like news and current affairs services in same language.</p> <p>Pilot use of cloud-based, on-premises live streaming Software-Defined Video Platform (Zixi) that enables broadcast-quality video delivery over IP.</p>
FY 2021 Target	<p>100% of backhaul distribution converted from C-band satellite to terrestrial IP.</p> <p>Once the migrations from satellite to terrestrial are complete, continue to review to further optimize distribution to reduce cost and mitigate WIMAX and 5G service interference.</p> <p>100% of DTH content migrated to DTH multiplex platforms housed with like news and current affairs services in same language.</p> <p>Further implement cloud-based, on-premises live streaming Software-Defined Video Platform (Zixi) for broadcast-quality video delivery over IP.</p>
FY 2021 Actual	With the elimination of the AOR and AFNet signals on Intelsat 901 and with Zixi and/or Dedicated Media Fiber connectivity to all USAGM satellite gateway stations and third party provider uplinks, 100% of backhaul distribution converted from C-band satellite to terrestrial IP. In addition, 100% of direct-to-home (DTH) content migrated to DTH multiplex platforms. This includes enhancements to existing satellites, as well as the activation of signals on satellites to the USAGM fleet.

Optimize remaining shortwave distribution, taking advantage of the strategic location and lower operating cost of Kuwait Transmitting Station	
FY 2017 Actual	Closed Sri Lanka Transmitting Station
FY 2018 Actual	<p>Poro Transmitting Station closed.</p> <p>Installation of new antenna at Kuwait Transmitting Station underway, expected to be complete in Q2 FY 2019.</p>
FY 2019 Actual	<p>Poro Transmitting Station handed over in September 2019.</p> <p>The installation of the new SW antenna at Kuwait Transmitting Station has been delayed due to contracting and logistical issues. It is now expected in Q3 FY 2020.</p> <p>Restored 4 (of 15) antennas on CNMI Transmitting Station to service.</p>
FY 2020 Actual	<p>At Kuwait Transmitting Station, new SW antenna for Middle East completed in Q2 FY 2020. Contract for design and installation of new SW antenna arrays for Africa awarded Q4.</p> <p>Restored 3 more (total 7 of 15) antennas on CNMI Transmitting Station to service.</p> <p>Broad cross-agency business review of all SW and MW transmission begun, with recommendations for cuts and reductions made.</p>
FY 2021 Target	<p>Maintenance and repair efforts to USAGM transmission facilities focused on functionality and protecting human life and property.</p> <p>Work to restore 2 more antennas on CNMI Transmitting Station to service.</p> <p>Build of new SW antenna arrays for Africa completed. Kuwait project completed.</p> <p>Review all transmission leases to identify further opportunities for savings.</p>
FY 2021 Actual	<p>CNMI: a) Antenna 270L has been erected, and transmission line repairs are ongoing. Proof of performance testing is scheduled for FY 2022 Q2. b) Parts for antenna 305L have been delivered, inventoried, and staged for erection as soon as an installation contract is awarded. c) Four additional antennas ordered in FY 2020 are being fabricated and scheduled for delivery in FY 2022. Delays largely the result of the ongoing pandemic.</p> <p>Kuwait: expansion project extended into FY 2023 due to two factors: a) terrain where the new antenna arrays are to be built requires extensive pre-work; b) Kuwait has implemented severe COVID restrictions that have prevented necessary visits by engineers outside the country</p>

Expand FM transmissions, to match audience preferences	
FY 2017 Actual	All 5 FMs in progress; contract actions completed, installations will fall into FY 2018
FY 2018 Actual	New FMs installed in Brazzaville and Pointe Noire, Rep. of Congo; Mbuji-Mayi and Katanga, DRC Mogadishu FM is underway, expected on air in Q1 FY 2019
FY 2019 Actual	FMs successfully installed in Mogadishu, Somalia; Lomé, Togo; and Mombasa, Kenya.
FY 2020 Actual	Lusaka, Zambia FM installed and on-air in Q2 FY 2020. One FM was installed in the Kakuma refugee camp and went on the air in Q4 FY 2020. The other FM at the Dadaab camp was vandalized and is therefore anticipated for Q1 FY 2021.  Ugandan communications commission rejected USAGM application to purchase existing frequency. If new frequencies become available in future, may reapply.
FY 2021 Target	Leverage national license in Democratic Republic of Congo to establish a new FM in North Kivu, to cover that region and portions of Burundi.  Continue to pursue FM opportunities in key markets, mostly in Africa and SE Asia.
FY 2021 Actual	The ongoing COVID pandemic delayed early technical preparations for this project. It is set to be completed by FY 2022 Q3.

#### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

USAGM made progress in its goal of streamlining program delivery with some delays due to the ongoing pandemic.

#### A CLOSER LOOK:

## Ability to nimbly react to a rapidly-changing environment

The USAGM technical response to COVID-19 challenges resulted in many IT production policy, and configuration adjustments to support both remote work and social distancing. Many IT modernization efforts that were underway intensified in FY 2021, during which most USAGM employees teleworked full-time. USAGM completed its rollout of Microsoft Teams, the agency's primary unified communications platform. TSI integrated new features into the Teams platform and replaced standard telephones with new VOIP-integrated telephones.

Other modernization efforts also improved system reliability and security, while also supporting employees working remotely. For example, more IT services were migrated to a hybrid of cloud and local-based platforms; and TSI secured web-based systems through measures like multi-factor authentication (MFA). MFA was successfully implemented for all USAGM employees in FY 2021.

USAGM continues to build out capabilities at its off-site data center and Wide Area Network (WAN) hub in Virginia, growing a faster and more reliable third-party distribution network that delivers content to audiences and affiliates better, more consistently, and more economically. TSI continues to transition content delivery from satellite and fiber to secure public internet, an effort that will largely be completed in early FY 2022.

Other, fundamental changes to USAGM's legacy content distribution system continue to be made at USAGM headquarters in Washington. After decades of delivering content globally via C-band satellite, then high-speed fiber, by early FY 2022 virtually all content delivery will be via secure public internet. This move has helped USAGM discontinue operating its own costly global fiber optic network, teleports, and leased satellite space segments, instead integrating highly targeted platform solutions that offer increased reliability at a lower cost.

## AGILITY OBJECTIVE 1

# Agility Performance Goal 1.2: Automate and streamline key business processes

Complete business process reengineering and automation of business and media workflows	
FY 2017 Actual	Completed integration of payroll and time and attendance systems. Completed rollout of electronic performance management system. Deployed electronic invoice payment system for domestic invoices; foreign invoices to be added in FY 2018.
FY 2018 Actual	Consolidation of support team efforts, including IT help desk, building facilities, Network Control Center, and telecoms, into integrated Solutions Center (now named TSI Help Center) has begun. Expected completion in Q1 FY 2019.
FY 2019 Actual	<p>Majority of Help Center services consolidated. Full rollout not achieved due to new requirement to support VOA technology suite.</p> <p>Continued to participate in effort to identify a new HR management system.</p> <p>Agency transitioned to Teams unified communications tools across 100% of agency desktops and mobile devices. Telephony integrated with Teams rolled out for 20% of workforce.</p>
FY 2020 Actual	<p>Help Center 50% consolidated. In FY 2020 USAGM focused Help Center consolidation specifically on integrating the support of Voltron, cross-training, building out new resources and implementation of new workflows.</p> <p>Completion of phase 1 Dataminer rollout for NCC; proof of concept allows local operations and monitoring processes to be centralized and monitored from any location.</p>
FY 2021 Target	<p>Help Center 100% consolidated.</p> <p>Continue to refine and improve USAGM's suite of key business process tools, including cognitive services/AI.</p> <p>Replacement of help desk tracking and assignment tool, Footprints, with a more robust, adaptable tool to help improve outcomes and response times.</p> <p>Complete NCC integration with distribution monitoring operations at Lampertheim (Germany) transmitting station. Review cloud integration of monitoring and automation platforms.</p>

FY 2021 Actual	<p>Help Desk consolidation not 100%, due to shifts in agency leadership over the past year. However, expanded service offerings planned with RFE/RL to add support on Help Desk for agency CMS, Pangea.</p> <p>Refinement and improvement of key business tools progressed, e.g., maximizing use of Intune for agency's Macintosh devices to ensure timely rollout of critical security and operating system improvements, among other tools.</p> <p>Developed draft AI strategy, training and education strategy, governance policy, and several other documents and programs. USAGM is also strongly engaged with several cross-agency AI working groups, which paves the way for more significant work with AI going forward.</p> <p>A soft launch of PIV Card for HR was begun to ensure safe, secure handling of PII.</p> <p>Contracting delays prevented acquisition of ACD (automatic call distribution) tool, needed for seamless use of IVR (interactive voice response) capability and call routing. Expected to complete acquisition and deployment by FY 2022 Q2.</p> <p>NCC integration with distribution monitoring operations at Lampertheim not yet complete. New servers deployed to support this, but other devices in Lampertheim require further replacement. Complete launch expected by FY 2022 Q2.</p> <p>Cloud integration of monitoring and automation platforms reviewed in FY 2021. NCC will work with TSI Enterprise Platforms and Global Networks teams to deploy cloud solution in FY 2022.</p>
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#### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

USAGM made progress in business process improvements in FY 2021 in several key initiatives, including: IT security, AI, and cloud integration.

## AGILITY OBJECTIVE 1

# Agility Performance Goal 1.3: Leverage cloud services and other technologies to boost workforce effectiveness and efficiency

Migrate onsite systems to cloud for enhanced effectiveness and efficiency.	
FY 2017 Actual	<p>Transitioned onsite digital archive system to a private cloud with recovery capability.</p> <p>Completed migration of intranet content to cloud-based platform.</p> <p>Upgraded IT infrastructure with more storage, bandwidth, and security.</p>
FY 2018 Actual	<p>Migration of onsite workstation/user storage to cloud for enhanced portability and a more robust backup/disaster recovery profile nearly complete (80%). Full completion expected in Q2 FY 2019.</p> <p>Transition of some broadcast operations to cloud-based playout and switching systems has not yet begun.</p>
FY 2019 Actual	<p>Completed migration of onsite workstation/user storage to cloud for enhanced portability and a more robust backup/disaster recovery profile.</p> <p>Continued transition of radio broadcast operations to cloud-based playout and switching systems.</p> <p>Implementation of off-site, carrier neutral Data Center begun with contract award.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>Matured and expanded support for business analytics suite that drives USAGM increased utilization of data-driven strategy and decision-making.</p>
FY 2020 Actual	<p>Datacenter services enabling over tenfold increase of external data communication capacity.</p> <p>Content distribution over the public Internet has replaced agency-provided satellite uplinks with geographically diverse internet and dedicated commercial media service provider content delivery.</p> <p>Consolidation of agency cloud connections to rationalize the agency's cloud service portfolio.</p> <p>Implemented Virtual Desktop capability to support the rapid growth of telework community on a secure, more scalable platform.</p> <p>Accelerated a reduced rollout of remote monitoring capability to accommodate COVID-19 remote operations (using VPN to access existing multiviewer).</p>



FY 2021 Target	<p>Investigate migrating IT requirements to hosted solutions where possible to optimize costs and dependability.</p> <p>Consolidate cloud service interconnections, providing datacenter cross-connects to cloud service transit gateways.</p> <p>Leverage improved network monitoring and automation tools to simplify and improve network device management.</p> <p>Deliver SD-WAN solution to enable Agency WAN services over the public Internet with improved service delivery, in terms of bandwidth and uptime.</p> <p>Azure Cloud integration to allow improved network and content monitoring with upgraded multiviewing platform.</p>
FY 2021 Actual	<p>USAGM began leveraging hosted solutions where practical and applicable, and continued investigating additional migrations. Current hosted solutions include Zixi Zenmaster cloud management for global content distribution, SD-WAN management and Meraki network device management. Possible future hosted solutions are being considered. Consolidation of cloud service interconnections and providing datacenter cross-connects to cloud service transit gateways is substantially complete with increased leverage of the Equinix datacenter.</p> <p>Network systems are enrolled in network monitoring systems, but tuning and training is required to leverage available automation capabilities. This effort will continue through FY 2022.</p> <p>SD-WAN service delivery continues. Management tooling and planning are substantially complete and pilot implementations are being provisioned. Complete delivery of the SD-WAN solution is expected in FY 2022.</p> <p>Improved Azure cloud integration was completed in FY 2021, improving network and application service delivery while reducing cost and complexity.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Implementation of off-site Data Center was incorrectly reported in the FY 2019 PAR and FY 2021 Congressional Budget Justification. It has been corrected here.

#### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

USAGM has progressed on schedule to meet its cloud services utilization targets for FY 2021.

## AGILITY OBJECTIVE 1

# Agility Performance Goal 1.4: Strengthen resilience and risk posture of the agency

Strengthen USAGM'S cybersecurity posture	
FY 2017 Actual	USAGM implemented cybersecurity measures that extend high-level DHS cybersecurity protection to agency-specific gaps, such as email, the network, and end points.
FY 2018 Actual	<p>Made progress toward defined level of maturity of IT Information Security Program.</p> <p>Piloted DHS CDM (Department of Homeland Security Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation) tools to enhance the agency's ability to identify and mitigate the impact of cyber threats. Full rollout expected in Q1 FY 2019</p>
FY 2019 Actual	Completed, received approval for, and published several dozen information security and privacy strategies, policies, and procedures. Completed first phase of multifactor authentication (MFA), as well as deployment of DHS monitoring tools and dashboard.
FY 2020 Actual	<p>Pilot program launched to implement multifactor authentication (MFA) for all users accessing the agency network, systems, applications, and cloud services. COVID-19 pandemic delayed agency-wide deployment.</p> <p>Launched a Data Loss Prevention pilot program to better protect information from accidental or malicious exfiltration. This pilot will also provide secure means for staff to share information with external partners for legitimate business needs.</p> <p>Adjusted IT security architecture, tools, and procedures to extend operations and monitoring to a de-centralized operations model during the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased the agency's ability to detect and prevent data loss, data exfiltration, and compromise of credentials.</p> <p>Built an Information Security Risk Management Program and IT Governance Program.</p>
FY 2021 Target	<p>Achieve "consistently implemented" maturity level for USAGM's information security program. All systems deployed per specified security baseline configurations; and multifactor authentication fully implemented for all access to Agency networks and applications.</p> <p>Data Loss Prevention program fully implemented.</p> <p>IT Security Risk Management Program piloted.</p> <p>IT Governance Program piloted.</p>

	<p>Develop cloud-centric and remote-work security policies and procedures that support the USAGM IT strategic plan.</p> <p>Integrate existing tools and introduce a LAN micro segmentation strategy to provide a more secure network.</p>
FY 2021 Actual	<p>The FY 2021 OIG FISMA report confirmed USAGM's IT Security program is at level 3, i.e., "Consistently Implemented."</p> <p>Most measures of the Data Loss Prevention program have been implemented. For example, USAGM can now monitor the movement of large amounts of data to and from the federal network; and will receive alerts regarding anomalous file movement and deletion of data in cloud-based storage.</p> <p>Piloting the IT Security Risk Management and IT Governance programs has been impacted by the dispersed nature of the workforce (i.e., 100% telework by most staff) since the pandemic began and the multiple changes of agency leadership, which will be required to support implementation.</p> <p>USAGM further developed cloud-based tools and procedures to support its decentralized workforce and new remote-work security policies and procedures that support the USAGM IT strategic plan. For example, configuring Microsoft Sentinel to follow a playbook for certain activities with the Azure and email services; and moving, updating, or extending security tools to support USAGM's off-site data center.</p> <p>USAGM completed integration of existing tools and introduced a LAN micro segmentation strategy to provide a more secure network.</p>

Use Enterprise Risk Management <sup>1</sup> to manage risks and optimize costs related to the achievement of USAGM objectives	
FY 2017 Actual	USAGM created an IT risk management division within the Office of the CIO.
FY 2018 Actual <sup>2</sup>	USAGM stood up the Office of Risk Management (ORM) responsible for agency-wide risk management activities, including Enterprise Risk Management (ERM). ORM developed and documented agency-level ERM framework, governance structure, and risk identification process.
FY 2019 Actual	Identified, assessed and analyzed enterprise risks and developed the agency's FY 2019 ERM Risk Profile that reflects significant risks to the achievement of USAGM's mission. The risk owners developed and implemented appropriate risk responses and corresponding efforts and performance measures to the profile risks. Drafted, documented, and received approval for agency-wide Information Security Risk Management (ISRM) Strategy and Framework in accordance with FISMA and NIST guidelines.
FY 2020 Actual	Implemented the FY 2019 ERM Profile risk response strategies, and monitored performance measures to track control effectiveness. Implemented agency-wide ISRM strategy and framework, including the development of an FY 2020 IT Security Risk Register that includes IT Security risks from federal and grantee networks. Conducted agency-wide Business Impact Analysis (BIA) across USAGM and the federal broadcast networks. Developing agency-wide Business Continuity Plan to mitigate disruption to agency operations during and after unforeseen events. Completed the FY 2020 ERM Cycle that culminated in the FY 2020 ERM Profile.
FY 2021 Target	Identify, assess, and analyze enterprise risks and develop the FY 2021 ERM Profile that reflects significant risks to the achievement of Agency mission and determine appropriate responses to the ERM Profile risks. Monitor the FY 2020 ERM Profile risks to gauge control effectiveness and monitoring of risk response strategies. Develop Agency-wide Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan and Business Continuity Plan (BCP) to mitigate disruption to Agency operations of mission essential functions during and after unforeseen events. Develop a Cyber Supply Chain Risk Management (C-SCRM) Strategic Plan consistent with the FY 2021 FISMA metrics.
FY 2021 Actual	USAGM began the process to move the Office of Risk Management into the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) during Q4 of FY 2021. The agency's Chief Financial Officer will serve as the agency's Chief Risk Officer. This change will further enhance the visibility of risk management within USAGM, and elevate ERM issues within agency senior staff and grantee entities. It will also align risk management with budgeting, integrate ERM efforts with other internal control initiatives coordinated through OCFO, and adapt USAGM's risk management structure to align with those of other similar offices governmentwide. USAGM continued efforts to mitigate and manage identified agency risks during the fiscal year, with particular emphasis on security and continuity of operations during the on-going global COVID pandemic. An updated Enterprise Risk Management Profile was assessed during the fiscal year, following the change in Administrations.

<sup>1</sup>Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) is an effective agency-wide approach to addressing the full spectrum of the organization's significant risks by understanding the combined impact of risks as an interrelated portfolio, rather than addressing risks only within silos. ERM provides an enterprise-wide, strategically-aligned portfolio view of organizational challenges that provides better insight about how to most effectively prioritize and manage risks to mission delivery (from OMB Circular A-11, Section 270.26).

<sup>2</sup>The FY 2018 Actual has been amended to reflect the creation of the Office of Risk Management.

## **ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:**

USAGM achieved its targets in the defined level of maturity of its IT Information Security Program, as determined by the OIG, in FY 2021.

During FY 2021, USAGM began the process to move the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) program to the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO). This will ensure greater coordination of risk assessment with the process of resource allocation within the agency. This movement is also designed to heighten the visibility of ERM and ensure program integrity under the rigor and professional standards of the agency's financial management practice. The agency's heightened focus on risk management benefitted USAGM during the fiscal year as it reacted to the myriad challenges presented by the ongoing global COVID pandemic and the need to maintain continuity of operations.

## A CLOSER LOOK:

# Resilience in the face of cyber threats

In FY 2021, USAGM continued to bolster its IT security posture to protect USAGM from persistent threats from nation-state actors seeking to attack government institutions like Voice of America (VOA). The agency's Office of Technology, Services, and Innovation (TSI) leveraged offerings from the Department of Homeland Security and key vendors to further strengthen USAGM's IT security defenses. TSI also continued to collaborate with USAGM's Office of Risk Management (ORM) to integrate information security and privacy concerns and review enterprise-level contingency and disaster recovery solutions.

TSI completed security assessments and continued developing a comprehensive Information Security Architecture. It also improved the maturity of the agency's Information Security and Privacy Program so that USAGM information assets and resources are better protected against nation-state and other malicious actor threats and are highly available to support the agency's mission. TSI developed and began implementing a strategy to elevate the agency's information security program to "consistently implemented."

In FY 2021, TSI developed and began deploying SecureEnrollment, a set of security measures that ensure a secure, consistent, and enforceable security posture on Agency-owned and supervised iOS mobile devices. TSI will continue deploying SecureEnrollment to all newly issued USAGM-owned devices, consistent with the device upgrade schedule, completing this transition in FY 2023.



*TSI has focused on mobile security and is deploying security software on agency mobile devices.*

## AGILITY OBJECTIVE 1

# Agility Performance Goal 1.5: Migrate to High Definition (HD) video production and transmission

Upgrade program production and delivery systems to HD capable	
FY 2017 Actual	<p>All TV studios fully HD capable.</p> <p>Automated HD TV channel set up for testing.</p>
FY 2018 Actual	<p>Both the satellite and terrestrial networks have been modified to incorporate HD delivery capability.</p> <p>Preparations completed to enable upgrade of Digital Asset Management System to make HD production and archiving more efficient.</p> <p>Onsite storage capacity to accommodate HD files expanded and upgraded.</p> <p>Global delivery of HD content direct-to-home and to affiliates enabled.</p>
FY 2019 Actual	<p>Completed all IT infrastructure and preparatory training required to transition to upgraded Media Asset Management system, Galaxy.</p> <p>Through USAGM's Office of the CIO, the CIO Council, and the Digital Governance Council directed by the Agency's Chief Technology Officer, began working with broadcast networks to identify more IT services and systems that can be shared and unified in order to gain efficiencies and cost savings.</p> <p>Continued to evolve global network and agency IT environment utilizing the most cost-effective mix of onsite technology infrastructure with cloud-based and other services to maximize compatibility, sustainability, security, serviceability, reliability, and global accessibility of IT systems.</p>
FY 2020 Actual	COVID-19 pandemic delayed Dalet Galaxy full implementation to early FY 2021.
FY 2021 Target	Continue implementation of Dalet Galaxy system throughout VOA, working to complete the technical installation by the end of FY 2021.
FY 2021 Actual	TSI has completed the migration of Dalet to Galaxy for the VOA Archive and VOA TV Production. The migration of Dalet to Galaxy for VOA radio is underway and is expected to conclude by FY 2022 Q2.

% of video streams transmitted in HD <sup>1</sup>	
FY 2017 Actual	20%
FY 2018 Actual	50%
FY 2019 Target	100%

<sup>1</sup> USAGM anticipates that the SD to HD transition for most target audiences will take several more years. Each HD stream will have a corresponding SD stream until that time.

#### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

The planned migration of the new Dalet Galaxy system was completed for the VOA Archive and VOA TV production; migration is currently underway for VOA radio.



## Agility Objective 2:

### Enhance strategic cooperation among USAGM networks and with support elements

USAGM is one of the world's largest news-gathering and reporting enterprises with more than 50 overseas news bureaus, 3,500 employees, and 1,500 stringer reporters. Each of the agency's five networks generates original reporting every day from in and around the world's hotspots – the Sahel and Central Africa, the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region, Burma, China, Egypt, Iran, North Korea, Russia, Syria, Yemen, et al – primarily in vernacular languages for target audiences in these areas. Too little of this rich content is translated and shared across USAGM to augment international news coverage for other USAGM vernacular services or made available to other global audiences in English. USAGM is remedying this by facilitating coordination among broadcast entities and support elements through the International Coordinating Committee (ICC), comprised of the heads of each of our five networks, and reinforcing their unique and respective mission-driven legislated roles in areas served by multiple broadcasters. USAGM will also continue to collaborate with other U.S. government entities on areas of mutual concern.

USAGM will:

- Ensure coordinated and complementary mission-driven operations and content in markets served by two USAGM media entities.
- Build and sustain internal content-sharing mechanisms, aligning internal editorial support and coordination, as needed.
- Employ new bridge editors and other content-sharing mechanisms to channel original reporting from the language services to the central newsrooms and across USAGM to get maximum mileage out of the content the agency currently produces.
- Better leverage news gathering, including stringer and correspondent networks or rotating correspondents, across USAGM to ensure required editorial coordination and avoid redundancy.

- Align all support functions to USAGM priorities, strategies, and goals.
- Participate in inter-agency meetings, committees, and strategies in support of U.S. government priorities to ensure that USAGM capabilities, expertise, actions, and impact are fully and accurately shared with other government entities.

## AGILITY OBJECTIVE 2

### Agility Performance Goal 2.1: Increase opportunities for sharing content across USAGM language services and networks

	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
Establish and employ systems for sharing content across language services and networks, including bridge editors and rotating correspondents	Established editorial coordinating committee	Launched a joint reporting project on China, <i>The Dragon's Reach</i> , involving all five networks	VOA and RFE/RL launched 24/7 Persian-language news channel.	Audit and review of new CMS systems begun.  VOA transitioned English, Spanish, Persian, and Korean to new CMS. MBN completely transitioned.	Modernize and improve architecture of systems.	Completed CMS audit and initiated re-integration of VOA onto modernized Pangea CMS.

#### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

In FY 2021, USAGM completed an enterprise audit of content management systems across all of its networks. As a result of this review, the decision was made to bring all networks to a common CMS platform and VOA began transitioning all of its services back to the common Pangea system.

## A CLOSER LOOK:

# Original reporting shared across language services and networks

**CUBAN PROTESTS** Several VOA affiliates in Chile and Colombia used OCB journalists to report on the protest events of July 11, because of their extensive knowledge of Cuba. OCB, through the Office of Business Development, makes its radio and audio-visual reports available to all USAGM affiliates. OCB content was used by a number of USAGM language services, including, VOA Russian. At OCB's request, RFE/RL provided videos of protests against the Cuban government in front of Cuban embassies in Kyiv and Belgrade. These videos were featured in OCB's coverage, underscoring to the importance Eastern Europe stills hold for Cuban citizens.

**CHINA** The influence of China is growing throughout the broadcasts areas of all USAGM broadcasters and has been the focus of enterprise reporting in recent years. In FY 2021, RFA and RFE/RL focused on a particular area of common concern in their regions, the mass incarceration of Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other Muslim minorities by the Chinese government. On their joint website, "Locked Up in China," they shed light on the individual stories of those imprisoned for harboring "strong religious views" and "politically incorrect" ideas.

**U.S. COVERAGE** VOA reporters from multiple language services collaborated on stories portraying the American political system, warts and all, as a model and inspiration for those who seek greater freedom and democracy around the world. With that in mind, reporters from 11 language services fanned out around the country in January to ask new Americans for their views on the January 6 Capitol riot. VOA Spanish and the News Center collaborated on an initiative, *Beyond the Wall*, highlighting the complexity of immigration in President Biden's first hundred days. Over 100 media partners carried the entire series, in particular affiliates in Mexico and Central America. MBN shares its high-profiled interviews with U.S. official and regional leaders, as well as exclusive footage with the other USAGM entities and regularly uses VOA content in its nightly U.S.-based newscast *From the Capital*. Alhurra also interviewed correspondents from VOA and RFE/RL to augment its coverage of different stories, including the U.S. elections and the withdrawal of troops in Afghanistan.

## AGILITY OBJECTIVE 2

### Agility Performance Goal 2.2: Enhance working-level coordination among networks and with support offices

	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
Building on ICC success, establish cross-agency working groups to leverage resources and expertise across networks and support offices	Editorial coordinating committee established	CIO Council and Digital Governance Council established; CTO appointed	Acquired programming working group established.  Data taxonomy standards established through Digital Governance Council.	Review of acquired programming not conducted.  Two networks began implementation of data taxonomy standards.	Continue and extend cross-agency reform efforts, including improving program review capacity and identifying best practices for innovation in the journalism sector.	Expanded cooperation and content sharing between RFE/RL and RFA to improve coverage of China.  Better integration of OTF circumvention tools into network operations.

#### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

RFA and RFE/RL expanded cooperation and content sharing to improve coverage of China in their respective markets. They operate a joint website, “Locked Up in China,” highlighting China’s mass incarceration of Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other Muslim minorities. RFE/RL is focusing on China’s growing influence across its coverage area, including its growing economic involvement and export of surveillance technology, and is providing an alternative to disinformation in areas where Chinese influence is expanding.

To support USAGM networks in restricted areas, OTF created and managed numerous mirror sites in heavily censored areas and began providing tailored digital security assistance for USAGM language services broadcasting into the most repressive environments. OTF expanded the robust circumvention tools available to broadcasters and audiences, along with diversifying the agency’s approach to unblocking content. By supporting multiple circumvention

technologies and device-to-device circumvention and communications tools, OTF has helped millions of unique users discover and access USAGM content and other websites censored by repressive governments.

#### A CLOSER LOOK:

## Coordination and planning among networks and with support offices

**DIRECT** The USAGM Office of Business Development (OBD), partnering with VOA, began the rollout of an updated online portal for affiliates to download broadcast quality programming from USAGM networks. Direct 3.0 launched in Russian and Ukrainian at the end of FY 2021 and will be followed in early FY 2022 by English, Spanish, and Indonesian. Partnering with teams that support major organizations such as Reuters and the Premiere League to deliver content to affiliates worldwide, Direct 3.0 represents a significant leap in both technologies and features. Along with better search functionality, a game-changing enhancement is accelerated file delivery. In many parts of world, Internet speeds are much slower than in the U.S., making delivery of large broadcast quality files via the web untenable for many USAGM affiliates. However, the new accelerated file delivery feature speeds up download times by 30 to 50 percent, enabling many affiliates to move from satellite delivery to downloads. This, in turn, will help USAGM lower its satellite delivery costs.

**OVER-THE-TOP** OBD continued development and launch of a multi-network video-on-demand platform. Referred to in the industry as Over-the-Top (OTT), the direct-to-consumer platform delivers a Netflix-like experience for audience members who are not served by an affiliate, are members of a diaspora community, or simply need to catch-up on a program that they missed. Branded as VOA+, Alhurra Connect, RFA+, and Martí+, viewers can download apps on Apple and Android phones and tablets, Amazon Fire TV, Samsung Smart TVs, and more than a dozen additional major “smart” television manufacturers. Current languages offered include English, Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin, Cantonese, Persian, Russian, Urdu, Korean, Khmer, Vietnamese, and Indonesian. Ukrainian, Burmese, Uyghur, and Lao will be added in early FY 2022.

## AGILITY OBJECTIVE 2

### Agility Performance Goal 2.3: Ensure complementary coverage in markets served by more than one USAGM network

	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
Conduct periodic content analysis of services that serve the same market	Conducted content analysis of VOA and RFE/RL coverage in Iran	Conducted content analysis of VOA and RFA coverage in Burma	Conducted external content review of OCB programming in Spanish.	Began central oversight of network program reviews, including examination of strategic benefit of each language service including where they operate in the same market.	Continue to strengthen program review capacity and communicate findings to USAGM leadership.  Oversee external content reviews as needed.	Strengthened VOA program review process.  VOA and RFA launched joint channel to Burma.

#### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

In FY 2021, VOA was able to add staff and resources to its Program Review process, expanding reviews and structured follow-ups to encompass every VOA language service, in line with USAGM’s strategic focus and VOA’s mission and charter.

In response to a military coup in Burma in February 2021, USAGM launched a 24/7 direct-to-home TV satellite channel for Burma, providing uncensored news and information. The channel, called “Ludu Meitswe,” which means “Friend of the People,” features Burmese content from VOA and RFA.



## Agility Objective 3:

### Enable greater impact and accountability through rigorous assessment and evaluation

USAGM's mission is more than reaching audiences. The agency utilizes a comprehensive Impact Model to capture effects of USAGM programming on audience members, the local media sector, and foreign governments. The Impact Model comprises a set of indicators tied to the agency mission, including: uniqueness of information, opinions on content trustworthiness, likelihood of content sharing and use, changes in understanding of current events, improvements in journalistic practices, and attention from public officials. In addition to continuous data collection, successful deployment of the Impact Model includes providing results to decision-makers and content providers throughout the agency and its networks.

Even as it holds networks accountable for advancing USAGM's mission, the agency simultaneously implements rigorous employee oversight. USAGM has renewed its focus on federal personnel appraisals and is currently undertaking several initiatives that will strengthen this important accountability tool.

USAGM will:

- Continue to implement and refine USAGM's Impact Model with incremental improvements.
- Offer briefings to U.S. government groups, other international broadcasters, and other interested organizations to share lessons learned from the path-breaking Impact Model.
- Feed impact data into planning and decision-making at all levels of the agency.
- Within the federal workforce, shift to a five-tier personnel performance appraisal system, tied to performance awards, and hold managers accountable for completing performance appraisals.

### AGILITY OBJECTIVE 3

## Agility Performance Goal 3.1: Strengthen research and evaluation program

	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
Number of USAGM target countries/regions with full USAGM media surveys conducted in the current or prior fiscal year	33	18	15	12	8	8
Percentage of surveys used to report performance data that were conducted in the current or prior fiscal year	71%	19%	26%	33%	50%	66%

### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

For Agility Performance Goal 3.1, USAGM achieved both indicator target levels. There was a large increase in the number of omnibus surveys conducted, as many were delayed from FY 2020 to FY 2021 and changed from face-to-face to phone surveys as a result of the pandemic.

A CLOSER LOOK:

## Modernization of USAGM research methods

**QUESTIONNAIRE REDESIGN** In FY 2021, as part of a multi-year initiative to modernize its core survey questionnaire, USAGM Research commissioned cognitive testing of the new instrument in five markets and survey testing in four. With the information gathered through this testing, the research staff finalized a new survey instrument, which is more focused on USAGM's brands and better aligned with how audiences now access content. The new questionnaire is also shorter, simpler, and provides comprehensive notes for translators and interviewers to collect accurate and consistent data across markets. Moving forward, the agency will continue to test new questions, ensuring that its measurement tools reflect the ways modern audiences adapt to rapidly shifting media landscapes.

**UPDATES TO IMPACT METRICS** As part of the cognitive testing of the new survey instrument, USAGM Research identified several terms and concepts contained in its impact metrics that respondents misunderstood or found confusing. The relevant questions have been reworked for clarity and will be incorporated into the USAGM Impact Model and relevant strategic and performance planning in FY 2022.

#### A CLOSER LOOK:

## Pilot projects to bring research data and evaluation products to senior leaders and other key decision-makers

**IMPROVING DATA MANAGEMENT** In FY 2021, USAGM made progress in its efforts to unify and fully leverage its extensive data resources. The Office of Policy and Research contracted a Data Engineer and a firm to work on data consolidation and management. It also submitted a funding proposal to GSA's Technology Modernization Board to support the construction of an enterprise data management system that would consolidate data from a variety of sources and automate data ingest and processing. This system would give decision-makers at all levels of the organization – from senior leadership to front-line programming staff – a clearer picture of audience behaviors and preferences.

**DEMAND-DRIVEN RESEARCH PROJECTS** USAGM launched cross-functional project teams to dig into specific programming and distribution questions at the request of network or agency leadership. These teams come together to compile data from a variety of sources – the agency's own research and analytics, external resources, and expert interviews – and propose concrete courses of action. During FY 2021, project teams convened to investigate opportunities in two challenging environments – Russia and Afghanistan – as well as use of messaging apps for news.

### AGILITY OBJECTIVE 3

## Agility Performance Goal 3.2: Improve personnel evaluation processes

	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
Strengthen personnel evaluation processes and compliance in the federal workforce	<p>Transitioned to 5-tier electronic personnel system, 40% of employees have personnel evaluations completed</p> <p>Provided managers with training on performance management</p>	<p>77% of managers trained in performance management. Additional training for remaining managers scheduled for Q1 FY 2019</p> <p>76% of employees had personnel evaluations completed</p>	82% of all eligible employees had personnel evaluations completed on-time.	100% of all eligible employees have personnel evaluations completed on-time.	95% of all eligible employees have personnel evaluations completed on-time.	93% of all eligible employees have personnel evaluations completed on-time.

Note: In FY 2021, USAGM's Office of Human Resources adjusted their designation of "eligible employees" to apply a more rigorous standard against which this metric is measured.

### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

While USAGM fell short of meeting the FY 2021 target, the Performance Management group has improved their accounting to increase the accuracy of this metric.

### AGILITY OBJECTIVE 3

## Agility Performance Goal 3.3: Improve performance culture of the agency

Results-oriented performance culture index (from Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey)	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
USAGM	48	51	51	NA	NA	NA
Government-wide (for comparison)	54	56	57	NA	NA	NA

#### INDICATOR:

##### Results-oriented Performance Culture Index

This indicator was an index derived from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) and combined questions dealing with recognition, supervision, safety, work connection, and performance. OPM discontinued the Results-oriented performance culture index; additionally, in FY 2020, OPM cut 7 of the 13 questions historically asked in this index to capture concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic. USAGM will develop new performance goals and indicators related to performance under its next Strategic Plan.

## Agility Objective 4:

### Foster employee engagement, development, and productivity

USAGM's diverse, multi-cultural, and multi-talented workforce offers a rich range of experience and expertise to carry out the agency's mission. Key to success in a rapidly changing, highly competitive global media environment is flexibility to develop innovative products for the agency's target countries consistent with emerging priorities, programming formats, and advances in technology.

Enhanced skill sets are required to program for and transmit via multiple media platforms – radio, TV, internet, mobile, and through social media. USAGM employees are most effective when they are well motivated, trained, and led.

Continued efforts to equip and energize the entire USAGM workforce are critical as the agency confronts mounting competitive pressures worldwide.

USAGM will:

- Promote human capital planning and management as a top priority for senior executives, managers, and supervisors throughout the agency.
- Consistently communicate organizational goals, objectives, priorities, and performance expectations in a timely manner to staff at all levels in the agency.
- Ensure a safe and secure work environment for all employees.
- Implement manager training curriculum focusing on performance management, human capital planning and processes, communication, and financial and administrative management.
- Improve the consistency and credibility of agency performance management processes.
- Develop cross-training and internal development standards and procedures, as applicable.
- Foster employee participation in agency health and wellness programs.

#### AGILITY OBJECTIVE 4

### Agility Performance Goal 4.1: Strengthen internal communications

	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
Establish/enhance two-way communication channels for better lateral and vertical communication	Improved communication by establishing and promoting internal social media, town halls, suggestion boxes, and focus groups.	Maintained communication over established channels and introduced an internal social media channel accessible to staff at all five networks.	90% of USAGM network staff using agency-wide communication channels for networking and events.	98% of USAGM network federal staff use agency-wide digital communication channels for networking and engagement events.	All USAGM federal and grantee staff have access to a single agency-wide communication tool for top-down announcements, global town halls, networking and engagement events.	All USAGM federal and grantee staff have access to a single agency-wide communication tool for top-down announcements, global town halls, networking and engagement events.
Improve transparency and accountability using internal communication initiatives	Provided an intranet page, weekly internal newsletter, and regular senior leadership announcements to all staff	Increased visits to CEO intranet page with weekly CEO Flash Report. Hosted internal networking events to strengthen engagement and communication.	3 out of 5 USAGM broadcast network senior managers use the channels to raise awareness and share agency news.	USAGM broadcast network senior managers use the channels to raise awareness and share agency news.	Increase use by senior leadership of agency-wide communication channels to inform and engage federal and grantee staff.	The agency-wide communication tool regularly features content by senior leaders, including USAGM Acting CEO.

#### Analysis of Results:

All federal and grantee staff (2,757 individuals) now have access to Workplace, a communication tool that allows for top-down and many-to-many communications, with a 92 percent activation rate (2,535 individuals). Town Halls, agency announcements, live workshops and discussions, and CEO notes to staff are disseminated on Workplace. Increasingly, agency offices, including the



Office of Human Resources, the Office of Civil Rights, and the Office of Workforce Support and Development, are turning to the tool to share information and communicate with employees. Additionally, an increasing number of individual staff members consistently share information with colleagues on the tool. In FY 2021, 1,879 posts were created by 61 people; 1,454 comments were made by 312 people; 3,679 reactions by 450 people.

#### AGILITY OBJECTIVE 4

### Agility Performance Goal 4.2: Improve employee training and development.

Percentage of employees who believe that their work unit has the job-relevant knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish organizational goals (from Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey)	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target	FY 2021 Actual
USAGM	56	70	71	NA	73	NA
Government-wide (for comparison)	71	80	81	NA	NA	NA

**Note:** In FY 2018, the wording of this question changed from “The workforce has the job-relevant knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish organizational goals” to “My work unit has the job-relevant knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish organizational goals.”

#### INDICATOR:

##### Workforce Knowledge and Skills

This indicator is taken from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey and measures the percentage of employees with positive responses to the statement that their work unit has the job-relevant knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish organizational goals.

#### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

##### Workforce Knowledge and Skills

Target: 73

Actual: NA

The 2021 FEVS was delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Data collection began in November 2021.

#### A CLOSER LOOK:

## Employee training, development, and mentoring

USAGM's Office of Workforce Support and Development (OWSD) is committed to providing learning and development opportunities for the agency workforce. OWSD achieves this goal by leveraging interagency agreements with other federal agencies and consulting with agency leadership. Some agreements include USAGM's learning management system – AgLearn (U.S. Department of Agriculture), coaching and leadership assessments (Office of Personnel Management), and employee assistance programs (Department of Health and Human Services).

USAGM continues to see a high number of retirement-eligible employees; as a result, succession planning is of utmost importance. Using on-demand learning, leadership development activities, mentoring, and employee assessments, OWSD continues to provide growth and developmental opportunities to the agency's support and leadership personnel.

The OWSD learning and development programs address fundamental skillsets and provide opportunities for aspirational growth. Project Management, Computer Technology, Career Counseling, and Retirement Training are just a few of the opportunities offered by OWSD.

The USAGM mentoring program is vital element of the OWSD curriculum. The mentoring program supports building strategic relationships and is USAGM mission focused. Mentees also participate in multiple coaching sessions and receive leadership assessments from OPM. The robust nine-month program offers any agency employee, regardless of grade level or job series, an opportunity to cross-train and network throughout USAGM.

In FY 2021, USAGM began the process of moving OWSD into the Office of Human Resources, in order to ensure greater coordination of training and human capital planning.

# Verification and Validation of Performance Measures

USAGM performance indicators are the product of a competitive, multi-million dollar research operation. Since FY 2017, USAGM has relied on 15 of the international media research firms to implement data collection in its markets worldwide. In addition to reducing costs through competition, the multiple-vendor approach ensures that the agency utilizes technical and regional experts to conduct research in the world's most challenging and sensitive environments.

USAGM contractually obligates research vendors to exercise quality controls during fieldwork data collection, such as daily checks of interview audio recordings; time stamps on survey administration; and consistent training for survey field teams. After research vendors deliver data, USAGM contracts yet another third-party vendor to conduct rigorous data validation procedures, resulting in the elimination of duplicate or insufficient data. When assurance procedures are complete, USAGM's Office of Policy and Research (OPR) calculates performance values, which are then sent to research directors for verification at the network level.

In terms of data limitations, the agency's audience reach estimates are weighted using available figures published annually by the Population Reference Bureau (PRB). Because the PRB is released once each year, and USAGM conducts research on a rolling basis, there are a few cases where audience estimates are based on population figures from the previous year. Since population figures tend to make larger shifts over the longer term, the agency has determined that smaller census differences from one year to the next are sufficient for audience estimates.

USAGM has worked to mitigate another data limitation, related to the decreasing number of recent omnibus and national surveys that comprise performance data. Through commissioning a suite of omnibus surveys on a global scale, USAGM has been able to raise the percentage of surveys conducted within the past two fiscal years to 66 percent, from a low of just 19 percent in FY 2018.

In 2021, USAGM continued its initiative to revise its standard national survey questions focusing on brand use rather than platforms to better reflect the way people think about their individual media consumption today. USAGM

commissioned cognitive testing of the new instrument in five markets and survey testing in four. The resulting new survey instrument is better aligned with how contemporary audiences access content today. The new questionnaire is also shorter, simpler, and provides comprehensive notes for translators and interviewers to collect accurate and consistent data across markets. USAGM continues to explore alternative methods for measuring audience reach, such as integrating digital analytics and commercial ratings data.

Through its leadership in the Conference of International Broadcasting Audience Researchers (CIBAR) and other industry communities of practices, USAGM participates in setting and enforcing international media research standards, including transparency in data collection and continuous learning throughout research implementation.

# Evidence Building

USAGM conducts a range of activities to build evidence and support organizational learning throughout the agency and its networks.

## RESEARCH AND ANALYTICS

USAGM undertakes quantitative, qualitative, evaluative, digital, and ad hoc research projects every year to directly support decisions on programming and strategy. Since FY 2002, USAGM has used a consolidated contract to procure audience and market research for all USAGM broadcast services. The agency maintains an extensive database of audience and market data that consolidates research results. The archive covers over 90 countries and contains socioeconomic and demographic data as well as strategically important information on local media, competition, and audience preferences and needs.

USAGM uses several enterprise digital analytics tools to track the performance of its content on web and social platforms. The research and analytics data guides USAGM strategic planning at all levels, specifically on-air program development, program reviews, and the agency's comprehensive annual strategic review of all language services.

## LANGUAGE SERVICE REVIEW

The Annual Language Service Review (LSR) is a Board directed, comprehensive assessment of the languages in which USAGM networks broadcast. The process fulfills the Congressional mandate in the U.S. International Broadcasting Act of 1994 to “review, evaluate, and determine, at least annually, after consultation with the Secretary of State, the addition or deletion of language services.”

USAGM analyzes data in key areas that shape priorities, including press freedom, political freedom, civil liberties, economic freedom, instability, and human development indices from nongovernmental organizations (e.g., Freedom House, Reporters Without Borders, The Heritage Foundation and The Wall Street Journal, and the United Nations Development Programme). These indicators are combined into a prioritization index, together with the State Department's global ranking of USAGM language services relative to U.S. foreign policy priorities. This

process enables USAGM to evaluate changing conditions worldwide and adjust broadcast languages accordingly.

As part of the Language Service Review, USAGM considers how the agency's mission is carried out by the networks in each target country and region. Informed by research and analysis on competitive landscapes, USAGM language services set priority goals for the coming year.

The results of this strategy review include summaries of the political context, media environments, target audiences, foreign policy elements, and USAGM objectives in each country and region. It also includes goals and performance targets, based on USAGM's Impact Model, for each USAGM target area for the coming year. As progress toward these goals and targets is tracked, USAGM has the opportunity to monitor performance and take corrective actions.

## **PROGRAM REVIEW**

USAGM networks conduct yearly reviews of their language services and their programming in order to maintain high-quality broadcasts and to help the language services progress toward their strategic goals. These program reviews are evaluations of the quality of a selection of programming of each language service based upon both internal and external feedback. The reviews aim to provide network leadership and USAGM an independent evaluation of the work of each language service and identify areas where further attention is needed in order to achieve the service's goals. In FY 2021, USAGM continued its central oversight of the networks' program review process and VOA expanded its program review capacity. OCB recruited a Standards Editor and relaunched its program review process.

## **IMPACT MODEL**

USAGM has developed a robust Impact Model, tied directly to its mission, which provides a comprehensive tool for measuring impact in the varied and complicated media environments in which USAGM networks operate. The model looks beyond sheer audience size to assess the concrete change that the news and information USAGM networks provided has made in the lives of audience

members, in the local media sector, and among governments. USAGM has now aligned all internal and external reporting with this model. All of the indicators used in language service strategies and for Impact Objectives come from the Impact Model.

USAGM has made impact a key priority. USAGM's research staff and network research directors continue to develop and refine the Impact Model and use it as a communications tool and accountability measure.

## **OTHER EVALUATIONS**

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) provides USAGM and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of USAGM, designed to prevent and detect waste, fraud, and abuse. OIG inspections also generally review whether policy goals and objectives are being effectively achieved. However, 22 USC 6209a(b) states that the OIG "shall respect the journalistic integrity of all the broadcasters and may not evaluate the philosophical or political perspectives reflected in the content of broadcasts."

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) audits agency operations to determine whether federal funds are being spent efficiently and effectively, including investigating allegations of illegal and improper activities, reporting on how well government programs and policies are meeting their objectives, and performing policy analyses and outlining options for Congressional consideration. GAO also advises Congress and the heads of executive agencies about ways to make government more efficient, effective, ethical, equitable, and responsive.



### Section 3: Financial Information

Message from the Chief Financial Officer .....	171
Independent Auditor's Report .....	172
Response to Audit.....	183
Balance Sheet .....	185
Statement of Net Cost .....	186
Statement of Changes in Net Position .....	187
Statement of Budgetary Resources .....	188
Notes to Principal Financial Statements.....	189
Required Supplementary Information .....	216

# Message from the Chief Financial Officer



U.S. AGENCY FOR  
GLOBAL MEDIA

330 Independence Avenue SW | Washington, DC 20237 | usagm.gov

## Message from the Chief Financial Officer

I am pleased to present the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 financial statements for the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM). The Performance and Accountability Report is our principal report to the President, the Congress, and the American people on our stewardship of the public funds with which we have been entrusted and which are essential for achieving our important mission to inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy.

The Agency has once again received an unmodified (clean) audit opinion on the FY 2021 and FY 2020 financial statements. Over the past year, we have worked diligently to meet the reporting, audit, and compliance requirements that the Office of Management and Budget, the Treasury, and the Congress have put in place to improve federal financial management, business practices, and accountability.

During FY 2021, despite many challenges, USAGM has continued to strengthen financial management in numerous ways, including the rollout of Momentum, its financial management system, to all overseas transmitting stations in order to improve system reliability, functionality, and transparency for Agency users; completing an updated assessment of significant business processes and rotational testing in accordance with OMB Circular A-123, Appendix A, Internal Controls over Financial Reporting.

USAGM senior leadership appreciates the importance of strong grants management and is taking steps to improve the agency's policies and procedures and their implementation. Working with a team of subject matter experts on a recently awarded contract, we are assessing opportunities for improvement in grantee oversight and monitoring.

While USAGM has improved accounting for large unliquidated obligations (ULOs), USAGM must strengthen its process for the timely identification and close-out of obligations that are no longer valid, as well as effectively communicate our risk-based approach to the Agency's auditors to better inform their methodology in the future.

It was through the dedication and hard work of our staff that we completed these achievements during FY 2021. We acknowledge there is additional work to be done and improvements to be made. With our commitment to continued progress and in partnership with the independent financial auditors and the Office of the Inspector General, we will successfully resolve the remaining issues presented.

Sincerely,

Grant Turner  
Chief Financial Officer



# Independent Auditor's Report



Office of Inspector General  
United States Department of State

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November 15, 2021

Ms. Kelu Chao  
Acting Chief Executive Officer  
U.S. Agency for Global Media  
330 Independence Ave., SW  
Suite 3300  
Washington, DC 20237

Dear Ms. Chao:

An independent external auditor, Kearney & Company, P.C., was engaged to audit the financial statements of the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) as of September 30, 2021 and 2020, and for the years then ended; to provide a report on internal control over financial reporting; and to report any reportable noncompliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements it tested. The contract required that the audit be performed in accordance with U.S. generally accepted government auditing standards and Office of Management and Budget audit guidance. In its report, *Independent Auditor's Report on the U.S. Agency for Global Media 2021 and 2020 Financial Statements* (AUD-FM-IB-22-11), Kearney & Company found

- the financial statements as of and for the fiscal years ended September 30, 2021 and 2020, are presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America;
- one material weakness<sup>1</sup> in internal control over financial reporting, specifically related to the validity and accuracy of unliquidated obligations;
- one significant deficiency<sup>2</sup> in internal control over financial reporting, specifically related to grantee monitoring; and
- one instance of reportable noncompliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, specifically Federal grant regulations.

Kearney & Company is responsible for the enclosed auditor's report, which includes the Independent Auditor's Report; the Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting; and the Report on Compliance With Laws, Regulations, Contracts, and Grant Agreements, dated

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<sup>1</sup> A material weakness is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis.

<sup>2</sup> A significant deficiency is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

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November 15, 2021, and the conclusions expressed in the report. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) does not express an opinion on USAGM's financial statements or conclusions on internal control over financial reporting and compliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements.

USAGM's comments on the auditor's report are attached to the report.

OIG appreciates the cooperation extended to it and Kearney & Company by USAGM managers and staff during this audit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Diana R. Shaw", is positioned above the printed name and title.

Diana R. Shaw  
Acting Inspector General

Enclosure: As stated.

cc: OCFO – Grant K. Turner  
Kearney & Company, P.C. – Kelly E. Gorrell  
OMS – USAGM Inspections

Page | 2  
[www.stateoig.gov](http://www.stateoig.gov)

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**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT**  
**AUD-FM-IB-22-11**

To the U.S. Agency for Global Media Acting Chief Executive Officer and the Acting Inspector General

**Report on the Financial Statements**

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM), which comprise the consolidated balance sheets as of September 30, 2021 and 2020; the related consolidated statements of net cost and changes in net position and the combined statements of budgetary resources for the years then ended; and the related notes to the financial statements.

***Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements***

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. Management is also responsible for preparing, measuring, and presenting required supplementary information in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; preparing and presenting other information included in documents containing the audited financial statements and auditor's report; and ensuring the consistency of that information with the audited financial statements and the required supplementary information.

***Auditor's Responsibility***

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America; the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Bulletin No. 21-04, "Audit Requirements for Federal Financial Statements." Those standards and OMB Bulletin No. 21-04 require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit of financial statements involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate under the circumstances, but



not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit of financial statements also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements. Our audits also included performing such other procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

#### ***Opinion on the Financial Statements***

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of USAGM as of September 30, 2021 and 2020, and its net cost of operations, changes in net position, and budgetary resources for the years then ended, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

#### ***Other Matters***

##### ***Required Supplementary Information***

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the Management's Discussion and Analysis and Deferred Maintenance sections (hereinafter referred to as "required supplementary information") be presented to supplement the financial statements. Such information, although not a part of the financial statements, is required by OMB Circular A-136, "Financial Reporting Requirements," and the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board, which consider the information to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing it for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audits of the financial statements. We did not audit and we do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

##### ***Other Information***

Our audits were conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements as a whole. The information in the Message from the U.S. Agency for Global Media Acting Chief Executive Officer, the Introduction, the Performance Information, the Message from the Chief Financial Officer, and the Other Information section of USAGM's Performance and Accountability Report (also known as "other information"), is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the financial statements or the required supplementary information. We read the other information included in the Performance and



Accountability Report to identify material inconsistencies, if any, with the audited financial statements. We did not audit and we do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the other information.

**Other Reporting Required by *Government Auditing Standards***

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* and OMB Bulletin No. 21-04, we have also issued reports, dated November 15, 2021, on our consideration of USAGM's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of USAGM's compliance with certain provisions of applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements for the year ended September 30, 2021. The purpose of those reports is to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing and not to provide an opinion on internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. Those reports are an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* and OMB Bulletin No. 21-04 and should be considered in assessing the results of our audits.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kearney &amp; Company".

Alexandria, Virginia  
November 15, 2021

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL  
OVER FINANCIAL REPORTING**

To the U.S. Agency for Global Media Acting Chief Executive Officer and the Acting Inspector General

We have audited, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America; the standards applicable to financial statement audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Bulletin No. 21-04, "Audit Requirements for Federal Financial Statements," the financial statements and the related notes to the financial statements of the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) as of and for the year ended September 30, 2021, and have issued our report thereon dated November 15, 2021.

**Internal Control Over Financial Reporting**

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered USAGM's internal control over financial reporting (internal control) to determine the audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinions on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of USAGM's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of USAGM's internal control. We limited our internal control testing to those controls necessary to achieve the objectives described in OMB Bulletin No. 21-04. We did not test all internal controls relevant to operating objectives as broadly defined by the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982,<sup>1</sup> such as those controls relevant to ensuring efficient operations.

A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements on a timely basis. A material weakness is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented or detected and corrected on a timely basis. A significant deficiency is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies and therefore, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that have not been identified. We identified certain deficiencies in internal control, described below, that we consider to be a material weakness and a significant deficiency.

---

<sup>1</sup> Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982, Pub. L. No. 97-255, 96 STAT 814 (September 8, 1982).





## **Material Weakness**

### **Validity and Accuracy of Unliquidated Obligations**

Obligations are definite commitments that will result in outlays, immediately or in the future. Unliquidated obligations (ULO) represent the cumulative amount of orders, contracts, and other binding agreements for which the goods and services ordered have not been received, or the goods and services have been received but payment has not yet been made. USAGM reported approximately \$243 million in ULOs, as of September 30, 2021. The validity and accuracy of ULOs was identified as a reportable control deficiency during the audits of USAGM's FY 2013 through FY 2017 financial statements. During the audits of USAGM's FY 2018 through FY 2020 financial statements, the control deficiency relating to ULOs was determined to be less severe and was communicated to USAGM through a management letter. However, during FY 2021, we identified a significant number and amount of invalid ULOs based on the lack of supporting documentation and the inability to support bona fide need, which increased the severity of the control deficiency to a material weakness.

Invalid obligations existed because Contracting Officer's Representatives and other program officials did not consistently perform reviews of obligations for validity and bona fide need as required by USAGM policy. We also found that deobligation requests were not always implemented in a timely manner. To mitigate misstatements to the financial statements, USAGM's Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) performs a quarterly analysis of the higher dollar value obligations to identify potentially invalid ULOs. During FY 2021, OCFO officials reviewed ULOs over \$30,000. However, USAGM had a significant number and amount of obligations under \$30,000, which means that the amount of ULOs that was not reviewed was significant. Although USAGM's complementary control identified many invalid ULOs, the lower dollar value invalid ULOs went undetected. As a result of the invalid ULOs that were identified by our audit, USAGM adjusted its FY 2021 financial statements. In addition, funds that could have been used for other purposes may have remained open as invalid ULOs, increasing the risk of duplicate or fraudulent payments.

## **Significant Deficiency**

### **Grantee Monitoring**

USAGM has four grantees that it funds through annual grant agreements: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Radio Free Asia (RFA), the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN), and the Open Technology Fund (OTF). In FY 2021, the four grantees collectively received more than \$299 million from USAGM in Federal grant awards, which represents approximately one third of USAGM's total funding. USAGM is responsible for monitoring the use of those funds to ensure that grantees adhere to applicable laws and regulations as well as to terms and conditions specified in the grant agreements. To aid in the grants monitoring process, USAGM approved and issued standard operating procedures (SOP)<sup>2</sup> for grantee monitoring.

<sup>2</sup> USAGM OCFO, "Standard Operating Procedures for Monitoring Grants," February 2019.



We selected 15 control activities identified in the SOP to test whether USAGM had effectively implemented grantee monitoring. For RFE/RL, RFA, MBN, and OTF, we found that 7 of 15 controls tested were operating effectively. The remaining eight control activities were not implemented by USAGM for the four grantees in FY 2021. Specifically, USAGM had not reviewed the allowability of grantee costs, performed grant close-outs, conducted formal documented site visits, reviewed performance progress reports, monitored equipment purchased by grantees, monitored grantee contracts and leases, reviewed grantee disbursement reconciliations, or conducted risk assessments, as described in the SOP.

USAGM officials stated that they have not fully implemented several of the key monitoring activities included in USAGM's SOP due to personnel and resource limitations. To address these limitations, USAGM engaged contractor support to perform grantee monitoring activities beginning in September 2021. Because USAGM continued to lack effective grantee oversight, there is an increased risk of waste, fraud, and abuse of Federal funds. USAGM is the primary funding source for the grantees; therefore, an organized and documented approach to oversight is needed to demonstrate accountability and mitigate risk. Weaknesses in controls over grantee monitoring have been reported each year since the audit of USAGM's FY 2013 financial statements.

#### Status of Prior Year Findings

In the Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting, which was included in the audit report on USAGM's FY 2020 financial statements,<sup>3</sup> we noted one issue related to internal control over financial reporting. The status of this issue is summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1. Status of Prior Year Finding**

Control Deficiency	FY 2020 Status	FY 2021 Status
Grantee Monitoring	Significant Deficiency	Significant Deficiency

#### USAGM's Response to Findings

USAGM provided its response to our findings in a separate letter included in this report as Appendix A. We did not audit management's response, and accordingly, we express no opinion on it.

<sup>3</sup> Office of Inspector General, *Independent Auditor's Report on the U.S. Agency for Global Media FY 2020 and FY 2021 Financial Statements* (AUD-FM-IB-21-10, November 2020).



### **Purpose of This Report**

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and the results of that testing and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of USAGM's internal control. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* and OMB Bulletin No. 21-04 in considering the entity's internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, this report is not suitable for any other purpose.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kearney &amp; Company". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alexandria, Virginia  
November 15, 2021

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS,  
REGULATIONS, CONTRACTS, AND GRANT AGREEMENTS**

To the U.S. Agency for Global Media Acting Chief Executive Officer and the Acting Inspector General

We have audited, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America; the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Bulletin No. 21-04, "Audit Requirements for Federal Financial Statements," the financial statements and the related notes to the financial statements, of the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) as of and for the year ended September 30, 2021, and have issued our report thereon dated November 15, 2021.

**Compliance**

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether USAGM's financial statements are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of USAGM's compliance with certain provisions of applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material impact on the determination of financial statement amounts. We limited our tests of compliance to these provisions and did not test compliance with all laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements applicable to USAGM. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion.

The results of our tests disclosed an instance of noncompliance that is required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards* and OMB Bulletin No. 21-04. In each year since USAGM's FY 2013 financial statement audit, independent auditors have identified substantial noncompliance with Federal grant regulations. USAGM is responsible for monitoring the use of funds provided to its grantees to ensure that they adhere to relevant laws and regulations. As noted in our Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting, USAGM has not fully implemented many of its grantee monitoring controls. As a result, USAGM continued to be in substantial noncompliance with the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 2, Subtitle A, Chapter II, Part 200, "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards," which provides guidance to agencies for grant oversight.

**USAGM's Response to Findings**

USAGM provided its response to our findings in a separate letter included in this report as Appendix A. We did not audit management's response, and accordingly, we express no opinion on it.



### **Purpose of This Report**

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of compliance and the results of that testing and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* and OMB Bulletin No. 21-04 in considering the entity's compliance. Accordingly, this report is not suitable for any other purpose.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kearney &amp; Company". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Alexandria, Virginia  
November 15, 2021

# Response to the Audit



330 Independence Avenue SW | Washington, DC 20237 | [usagm.gov](https://usagm.gov)

November 15, 2021

Diana Shaw  
Acting Inspector General  
U.S. Department of State

Dear Ms. Shaw:

The U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) is committed to maintaining fiscal responsibility and transparency for the taxpayer funds entrusted by Congress to pursue its global mission to inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy. The Performance and Accountability Report (PAR) is a key part of maintaining this commitment, providing a comprehensive account of the USAGM's financial activities.

I am pleased that USAGM continues to receive an unmodified (clean) opinion for this fiscal year's financial statement audit. USAGM is committed to working towards greater efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability in financial operations. USAGM operations are global and complex, with programming in 62 languages, thousands of media partners, and on-the-ground reporting capabilities around the world. USAGM recognizes that our strength as an organization requires a strong fiscal foundation and effective stewardship over the resources entrusted to us by the American people. Working with a team of subject matter experts on a recently awarded contract, USAGM is assessing opportunities for improvement in its grantee oversight and monitoring. I am confident we will improve compliance in this area during FY 2022. Additionally, of the \$242.9 million USAGM reported unliquidated obligations (ULOs), as of September 30, 2021, \$205.6 million (85%) were new FY 2021 obligations, and an additional \$22.65 million (9%) were prior year obligations with active period of performance during FY 2021. Of the remaining \$14.65 million (6%) with an expired period of performance, ULOs over \$30K were reviewed and adjusted; however, we agree that USAGM has a significant number of smaller dollar obligations that were not reviewed. USAGM has already made significant progress to address invalid ULOs, however, we will strengthen our process for the timely identification and close-out of obligations that are no longer valid, including lower dollar value amounts.



We thank Kearney & Company for their sustained efforts and professionalism in working through the complex issues associated with the global nature of USAGM's financial processes.

Sincerely,



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Grant Turner  
Chief Financial Officer

# Financial Statements

**U.S. Agency for Global Media  
Consolidated Balance Sheet  
As of September 30, 2021 and 2020**  
(in thousands)

	FY 2021	FY 2020
<b>Assets (Note 2):</b>		
<b>Intragovernmental:</b>		
Fund Balance with Treasury (Note 3)	\$ 253,758	\$ 250,954
Accounts Receivable (Note 5)	193	242
Total Intragovernmental	<u>253,951</u>	<u>251,196</u>
<b>With the Public:</b>		
Cash and Other Monetary Assets (Note 4)	3	3
Accounts Receivable, Net (Note 5)	48	71
General Property, Plant and Equipment, Net (Note 6)	46,651	58,705
Advances and Prepayments		
Advances to Surrogate Broadcasters and Internet Freedom (Note 7)	95,000	85,500
Other Prepaid Assets (Note 8)	569	697
Total with the Public	<u>142,271</u>	<u>144,976</u>
Total Assets	<u>\$ 396,222</u>	<u>\$ 396,172</u>
<b>Liabilities (Note 9):</b>		
<b>Intragovernmental:</b>		
Accounts Payable	\$ 3,079	\$ 2,561
Other Liabilities		
Accrued FECA Liability (Note 9)	1,298	1,350
Other Liabilities (Note 12)	2,921	2,704
Total Intragovernmental	<u>7,298</u>	<u>6,615</u>
<b>With the Public:</b>		
Accounts Payable	21,433	17,512
Federal Employee (and Veteran) Benefits Payable		
Actuarial FECA Liabilities (Note 9)	7,754	8,080
Accrued Annual and Compensatory Leave (Note 9)	21,805	21,338
Foreign Service Nationals After-Employment Benefits (Note 9 and 10)	7,090	6,586
Environment and Disposal Liabilities (Note 9 and 11)	823	735
Other Liabilities		
Accrued Payroll and Benefits (Note 9)	12,639	11,681
Other Liabilities (Note 12)	6,942	6,505
Total with the Public	<u>78,486</u>	<u>72,437</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>\$ 85,784</u>	<u>\$ 79,052</u>
Commitment and Contingencies (Note 9, 13 and 14)		
<b>Net position:</b>		
Unexpended Appropriations-Funds from Other than Dedicated Collections	\$ 292,620	\$ 284,723
Cumulative Results of Operations-Funds from Other than Dedicated Collections	17,818	32,397
Total Net Position	<u>\$ 310,438</u>	<u>\$ 317,120</u>
 Total Liabilities and Net Position	 <u>\$ 396,222</u>	 <u>\$ 396,172</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these statements.



**U.S. Agency for Global Media**  
**Consolidated Statement of Net Cost**  
**For the Years Ended September 30, 2021 and 2020**  
*(in thousands)*

	FY 2021	FY 2020
<b>Voice of America (VOA)</b>		
Gross Costs	\$ 422,745	\$ 430,132
Less: Earned Revenues	<u>(1,897)</u>	<u>(1,231)</u>
Net Program Costs	420,848	428,901
<b>Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB)</b>		
Gross Costs	41,753	38,402
Less: Earned Revenues	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net Program Costs	41,753	38,402
<b>Surrogate Broadcasters and Internet Freedom</b>		
Gross Costs	359,385	356,324
Less: Earned Revenues	<u>(2,519)</u>	<u>(3,044)</u>
Net Program Costs	356,866	353,280
Total Gross Costs	823,883	824,858
Less: Total Earned Revenues	<u>(4,416)</u>	<u>(4,275)</u>
<b>Net Cost of Operations</b>	<u>\$ 819,467</u>	<u>\$ 820,583</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these statements.

**U.S. Agency for Global Media**  
**Consolidated Statement of Changes in Net Position**  
**For the Years Ended September 30, 2021 and 2020**  
*(in thousands)*

	FY 2021	FY 2020
<b>Unexpended Appropriations:</b>		
Beginning Balance	\$ 284,723	\$ 269,907
Appropriations Received	802,957	810,396
Appropriations Transferred In/Out (+/-)	-	360
Other Adjustments (+/-)	(2,400)	(8,600)
Appropriations Used	<u>(792,660)</u>	<u>(787,340)</u>
Net Change in Unexpended Appropriations	<u>7,897</u>	<u>14,816</u>
<b>Total Unexpended Appropriations: Ending</b>	<u>292,620</u>	<u>284,723</u>
<b>Cumulative Results from Operations:</b>		
Beginning Balances	\$ 32,397	\$ 54,664
Appropriations Used	792,660	787,340
Transfers-in/out without reimbursement (+/-)	9	-
Imputed Financing	12,219	11,320
Other (+/-)	<u>-</u>	<u>(344)</u>
Net Cost of Operations (+/-)	<u>819,467</u>	<u>820,583</u>
Net Change in Cumulative Result of Operations	<u>(14,579)</u>	<u>(22,267)</u>
<b>Cumulative Results of Operations: Ending</b>	<u>17,818</u>	<u>32,397</u>
<b>Net Position</b>	<u>\$ 310,438</u>	<u>\$ 317,120</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these statements.

**U.S. Agency for Global Media**  
**Combined Statement of Budgetary Resources**  
**For the Years Ended September 30, 2021 and 2020**  
*(in thousands)*

	FY 2021	FY 2020
<b>Budgetary Resources:</b>		
Unobligated Balance from Prior Year Budget Authority, Net (Discretionary and Mandatory)	\$ 111,063	\$ 83,764
Appropriations (Discretionary and Mandatory)	803,425	810,864
Spending Authority from Offsetting Collections (Discretionary and Mandatory)	3,818	7,572
Total Budgetary Resources	<u>\$ 918,306</u>	<u>\$ 902,200</u>
<b>Status of Budgetary Resources:</b>		
New Obligations and Upward Adjustments (Total)	\$ 838,791	\$ 818,778
Unobligated Balance, End of Year		
Apportioned, Unexpired Accounts	28,283	43,316
Unapportioned, Unexpired Accounts	14,382	13,015
Unexpired Unobligated Balance, End of Year	42,665	56,331
Expired Unobligated Balance, End of Year	36,850	27,091
Unobligated Balance, End of Year (Total)	79,515	83,422
Total Budgetary Resources	<u>\$ 918,306</u>	<u>\$ 902,200</u>
<b>Outlays, Net, and Disbursements, Net</b>		
Outlays, Net (Total) (Discretionary and Mandatory)	798,197	797,485
Agency Outlays, Net (Discretionary and Mandatory)	<u>\$ 798,197</u>	<u>\$ 797,485</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these statements.

# United States Agency for Global Media

## Notes to Principal Financial Statements

### NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

#### A. Reporting Entity

On October 1, 1999, the United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM), originally the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) became the independent, autonomous entity responsible for all U.S. Government and government-sponsored, non-military, international broadcasting. This was the result of the 1998 Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act (Public Law 105-277). The Fiscal Year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act made several significant reforms to the Agency's management structure. Primarily, the act authorized the position of a Presidentially-nominated, Senate-confirmed Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Under the new statutory structure, the CEO serves as agency head, assuming all leadership, management, and operational authorities. The six media organizations that comprise the USAGM complement and reinforce one another in a shared mission vital to U.S. national interests: to inform, engage and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy. USAGM's mission is supported by two overarching strategic goals: (1) expanding freedom of information and expression and (2) communicating America's democratic experience and values. Together, USAGM networks communicate each week with more than 394 million people across the globe. USAGM is composed of two federal entities:

- Voice of America (VOA)
- Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB)

The CEO and oversight and support offices including the International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB) and Office of Technology Services and Innovation (TSI) do not engage in the development of news content. The CEO provides overall governance for USAGM and has authority to make grants to carry out its statutorily defined broadcasting mission. The oversight and support offices of TSI maintain the global distribution network over which all USAGM-funded news and information programming is distributed. Other offices provide administrative functions which are governed by federal laws and regulations.

The VOA and OCB are the components of the agency that develop news content along with grantees or surrogate broadcasters: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Radio Free Asia (RFA), Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN). The Open Technology Fund (OTF) supports internet freedom. All USAGM broadcast services adhere to the standards and principles of the International Broadcasting Act of 1994, as amended, and support the USAGM mission.

The grantees or surrogate broadcasters and internet freedom - RFE/RL, RFA, MBN, and OTF - are independent non-federal entities who receive the majority of their funding from USAGM. They are organized and managed as private, independent, non-profit corporations and considered disclosure entities in accordance with Statement of Federal Financial Accounting Standards (SFFAS) No. 47, Reporting Entity (See Note 18). Further information on these grantees can be found at:

- Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty - [www.rferl.org](http://www.rferl.org)
- Radio Free Asia - [www.rfa.org](http://www.rfa.org)
- Middle East Broadcasting Networks - [www.alhurra.com](http://www.alhurra.com)
- Open Technology Fund - [www.opentech.fund](http://www.opentech.fund)

#### **B. Basis of Presentation and Accounting**

These financial statements have been prepared to report the financial position, net cost, changes in net position, and budgetary resources of USAGM, consistent with the Chief Financial Officers' Act of 1990 and the Government Management Reform Act of 1994. These financial statements have been prepared from the books and records of USAGM in accordance with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) for federal entities, and presented in accordance with the form and content requirements of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular No. A-136, Financial Reporting Requirements, revised. GAAP for federal entities, as prescribed by the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board (FASAB); FASAB's SFFAS No. 34, The Hierarchy of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, Including the Application of Standards Issued by the Financial Accounting Standards Board, which incorporates the GAAP hierarchy

into FASAB's authoritative literature is the designated standard-setting body for the Federal Government.

Financial transactions are recorded in the financial system, using both an accrual and a budgetary basis of accounting. Under the accrual method, revenues are recognized when earned, and expenses are recognized when a liability is incurred, without regard to the receipt or payment of cash. Budgetary accounting facilitates compliance with legal requirements and mandated controls over the use of federal funds. It generally differs from the accrual basis of accounting in that obligations are recognized when new orders are placed or contracts awarded. In Accordance with SFFAS 56, accounting standards allow certain presentations and disclosures to be modified, if needed, to prevent the disclosure of classified information.

#### **C. Assets and Liabilities**

Assets and liabilities presented on USAGM's balance sheet includes both entity and non-entity balances. Entity assets are assets that USAGM has authority to use in its operations. Non-entity assets are held and managed by USAGM, but are not available for use in operations.

Intragovernmental assets and liabilities arise from transactions between USAGM and other federal entities. All other assets and liabilities result from activity with non-federal entities. Liabilities covered by budgetary or other resources are those liabilities of USAGM for which Congress has appropriated funds or funding is otherwise available to pay amounts due. Liabilities not covered by budgetary or other resources represent amounts owed in excess of available congressionally appropriated funds or other amounts. The liquidation of liabilities not covered by budgetary or other resources is dependent on future congressional appropriations or other funding.

#### **D. Fund Balance with Treasury**

Fund Balance with Treasury (FBWT) includes several types of funds available to pay current liabilities and finance authorized purchases.

### General Funds

These consist of expenditure accounts used to record financial transactions arising from congressional appropriations, as well as receipt accounts.

### Trust Funds

These are used for the acceptance and administration of funds contributed from public and private sources and programs.

### Other Fund Types

These include miscellaneous receipt accounts, deposit and clearing accounts maintained to track receipts and disbursements awaiting proper classification.

USAGM does not maintain cash in commercial bank accounts for the funds reported in the balance sheet, except for Imprest Funds under section E.

Treasury processes domestic receipts and disbursements. Two Department of State financial service centers, located in Bangkok, Thailand and Charleston, South Carolina, provide financial support for USAGM operations overseas. The U.S. disbursing officer at each center has the delegated authority to disburse funds on behalf of the Treasury.

### E. Imprest Fund

USAGM operates an imprest fund in the amount of \$3,000 at USAGM Robert E. Kamosa Transmitting Station in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Due to the remote location and 24 hour continuous operation of the mission, these funds are necessary and used to pay for time sensitive expenditures required to be paid in cash to local vendors. USAGM has Treasury approved delegation of disbursing authority for the establishment and operation of the imprest fund.

### F. Accounts Receivable

Accounts receivable consists of amounts owed to USAGM by other federal agencies and the public. Intragovernmental accounts receivable represents amounts due from other federal agencies for reimbursable activities. Accounts receivable from the public represent amounts due from common carriers for unused airline tickets, and from vendors for erroneous or duplicate payments. These receivables are stated net of any allowances for estimated uncollectible

amounts. The allowance, if any, is determined by the nature of the receivable and an analysis of aged receivable activity. Aged receivables more than 120 days without payment arrangements in place are sent to Treasury for collection through the Treasury Offset Program (TOP).

#### **G. Advances and Prepayments**

Payments made in advance of the receipt of goods and services are recorded as advances or prepayments, and recognized as expenses when the related goods and services are received. Advances are made principally for: official travel to some USAGM employees; salary advances to some USAGM employees, often for employees transferring to overseas assignments; advance payments to other Federal entities as part of a reimbursable agreement; prepaid leases; and miscellaneous prepayments and advances to surrogate broadcasters and internet freedom for future services. Advances to surrogate broadcasters and internet freedom receiving grant awards are described further in Note 7.

#### **H. Personnel Compensation and Benefits**

##### **Annual, Sick and Other Leave Program**

Annual, sick and other leave time are accrued when earned, reduced when taken, and adjusted for changes in compensation rates. An unfunded liability is recognized for earned but unused annual leave as these balances will be funded from future appropriations in the year that leave is taken. Sick leave is expensed when taken, and no liability is recognized as employees are not vested in unused sick leave.

##### **Retirement Plans**

Civil Service employees participate in either the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). Employees covered under CSRS contribute 7.00 percent of their salary; USAGM contributes 7.00 percent. Employees covered under CSRS also contribute 1.45 percent of their salary to Medicare insurance; USAGM makes a matching contribution. On January 1, 1987, FERS went into effect pursuant to Public Law 99-335. Most employees hired after December 31, 1983, are automatically covered by FERS and Social Security. Employees hired prior to January 1, 1984, were allowed to join FERS or remain in CSRS. Employees participating in FERS contribute 0.80



percent of their salary, with USAGM making contributions of 16.00 percent. FERS employees also contribute 6.20 percent to Old Age Survivor and Disability Insurance (OASDI) and 1.45 percent to Medicare insurance. USAGM makes matching contributions to both.

Effective January 1, 2013, pursuant to Public Law 112-96, Section 5001, new employees (as designated in the statute) pay higher FERS employee contributions (3.10 percent instead of 0.80 percent) with USAGM making contributions of 14.20 percent. These employees are covered under the FERS as Revised Annuity Employees (RAE), FERS-RAE. Effective January 1, 2014, Section 401 of the "Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013," signed into law by the President on December 26, 2013, made another change to the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS). New employees (as designated by that statute) pay higher FERS employee contributions (4.40 percent instead of 0.80 percent) with USAGM making contributions of 14.20 percent. These employees are covered under the FERS as Further Revised Annuity Employees (FRAE), FERS-FRAE.

Employees covered by CSRS and FERS are eligible to contribute to the U.S. Government's Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), administered by the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board. USAGM makes a mandatory contribution of 1 percent of basic pay for FERS-covered employees. In addition, USAGM makes matching contributions of up to 5 percent of basic pay, for FERS employees who contribute to the Thrift Savings Plan. Contributions are matched dollar for dollar for the first 3 percent of pay contributed each pay period and 50 cents on the dollar for the next 2 percent of pay. For CSRS participants, there is no governmental matching contribution. The maximum amounts that either FERS or CSRS employees may contribute to the plan in calendar year 2021 is \$19,500. Those who are of age fifty and older may contribute an additional \$6,500 in catch-up contributions.

Foreign Service employees participate in either the Foreign Service Retirement and Disability System (FSRDS) or the Foreign Service Pension System (FSPS). The FSRDS is the Foreign Service equivalent of CSRS as described in chapter 83 of Title 5, U.S.C. Employees covered under FSRDS contribute 7.25 percent of their salary; USAGM contributes 7.25 percent. Employees covered under FSRDS also contribute 1.45 percent of their salary to Medicare insurance; USAGM makes a matching contribution. The FSPS is the Foreign Service equivalent of the FERS, as described in chapter 84 of Title 5, U.S.C. In general, all Foreign Service eligible

participants hired after December 31, 1983, participate in the FSPS. Most employees hired after December 31, 1983, are automatically covered by FSPS and Social Security. Employees hired prior to January 1, 1984, were allowed to join FSPS or remain in FSRDS. Employees participating in FSPS contribute 1.35 percent of their salary, with USAGM making contributions of 20.22 percent. FSPS employees also contribute 6.20 percent to OASDI and 1.45 percent to Medicare insurance. USAGM makes matching contributions to both. A primary feature of FSPS is that it offers a TSP into which USAGM automatically contributes 1 percent of pay and matches employee contributions up to an additional 4 percent. FSRDS-covered employees may make voluntary contributions to the TSP, but without the employer 1 percent contribution or employer-matching contributions. Effective January 1, 2013, pursuant to Public Law 112-96, Section 5001, new employees (as designated in the statute) pay higher FSPS employee contributions (3.65 percent instead of 1.35 percent) with USAGM making contributions of 17.92 percent. These employees are covered under FSPS as Revised Annuity Employees (RAE), FSPS-RAE. The Department of State manages the FSRDS and FSPS plans.

#### Health Insurance

Most of USAGM's employees participate in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHB), a voluntary program that provides protection for enrollees and eligible family members in case of illness, accident, or both. Under FEHB, USAGM contributes the employer's share of the premium as determined by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

#### Life Insurance

Unless specifically waived, employees are covered by the Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Program (FEGLI). FEGLI automatically covers eligible employees for basic life insurance in amounts equivalent to an employee's annual pay. Enrollees and their family members are eligible for additional insurance coverage, but the enrollee is responsible for the cost of the additional coverage. Under FEGLI, USAGM contributes the employer's share of the premium, as determined by OPM.

### Workers' Compensation

The Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) provides income and medical cost protection to covered federal civilian employees injured on the job, to employees who have incurred work-related occupational diseases, and to beneficiaries of employees whose deaths are attributable to job-related injuries or occupational diseases. The FECA program is administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), which initially pays valid claims. The FECA liability consists of two components. First is a current liability amount based on actual claims paid by DOL but not yet reimbursed by USAGM. Timing of USAGM's reimbursement to DOL is dependent on appropriated funds made available for this purpose and generally occurs two to three years after actual claims had been paid. The second FECA component is the actuarial estimate of future benefit payments for death, disability, medical, and miscellaneous costs. This estimate is determined using a method that analyzes historical benefit payment patterns related to a specific period in order to predict the ultimate payments related to the current period. The estimated liability is not covered by budgetary resources and will require future funding.

### Federal Employees Post-Employment Benefits

USAGM does not report CSRS, FERS, FEHB or FEGLI assets, accumulated plan benefits, or unfunded liabilities applicable to its employees; OPM reports this information. As required by Statements of Federal Financial Accounting Standards (SFFAS) No.5, Accounting for Liabilities of the Federal Government, USAGM reports the full cost of employee benefits for the programs that OPM administers. USAGM recognizes an expense and imputed financing source for the annualized unfunded portion of CSRS, post-retirement health benefits, and life insurance for employees covered by these programs. The additional costs are not actually owed or paid to OPM, and thus are not reported as liabilities on the balance sheet. For each fiscal year the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) calculates the U.S. Government's service costs for covered employees, which is an estimate of the amount of funds that, if accumulated annually and invested over an employee's career, would be enough to pay that employee's future benefits. Since the U.S. Government's estimated FY 2021 service cost exceeds contributions made by employer agencies and covered employees, the plan is not fully funded by USAGM and its employees. For FY 2021 USAGM recognized \$12.2 million as an imputed cost and as an imputed financing source for the

difference between the estimated service cost and the contributions made by USAGM and its employees.

#### **Foreign Service Nationals (FSN) After-Employment Benefits**

USAGM employs approximately 280 FSN employees at 23 overseas posts. Many of these posts offer after-employment benefits that are based on the employment laws and prevailing wage practices in that host country. These benefits may include annuity-based defined benefit plans, defined contribution plans, and lump sum voluntary severance and retirement benefits. Descriptions of these after-employment benefits and projected plan benefits are presented in fuller details in Note 10.

#### **Personal Services Contractors**

Beginning in June 2019, Personal Service Contractors (PSCs) became a part of USAGM's workforce. VOA relies on the specialized skills of over 550 contractors to develop and deliver content to its worldwide audience. USAGM is exploring different approaches to streamline management of these contractors and increase the agility with which leadership can leverage its contractor resources to complement its robust federal workforce. Previously managed by staffing service procurements, PSCs are currently managed directly in accordance with individual personnel service contract agreements with the agency. The agency has a procurement contract to administer payroll and associated benefits on the agency's behalf. PSCs are eligible to participate in a voluntary benefits program that offers health, dental, vision, disability, and life insurance benefits for enrollees and eligible family members. USAGM contributes a flat monthly rate to health insurance plans. In addition, PSCs may use pre-tax dollars to purchase WMATA SmartTrip benefits. USAGM also pays the employer's portion of Workers' Compensation premiums due to Federal and State authorities. PSCs do not participate in after-employment benefits, and there is no post-employment liability related to PSCs.

### **I. Contingent Liabilities**

A loss contingency is an existing condition, situation, or set of circumstances involving uncertainty as to possible loss which should ultimately be resolved when a future event occurs or fails to occur. Contingencies are accrued in the financial statements where the liability is probable and the cost is measurable.

Contingencies that do not meet any of the conditions for liability recognition, but for which there is at least a reasonable possibility that a liability may be incurred, are disclosed but not accrued, as presented in Note 14.

#### **J. Revenues and Financing Sources**

USAGM operations are financed through congressional appropriations, reimbursement for the provision of goods or services to other federal agencies and the public, transfers and donations. Financing sources are received in direct annual and no-year appropriations; these appropriations may be used, within statutory limits, for operating and capital expenditures.

Work performed for other federal agencies under reimbursable agreements is initially financed through either an advance of funds received or the Bureau providing the service, and is subsequently reimbursed. Reimbursements are recognized as revenue when earned, i.e., goods have been delivered or services rendered, and the associated costs have been incurred. Occasionally, earned revenues occur when USAGM provides goods or services to the public in which case the revenue is recognized when collected.

An imputed financing source is recognized to offset costs incurred by USAGM and funded by another federal source, in the period in which the cost was incurred. The types of costs offset by imputed financing are employees' pension benefits, health insurance, life insurance, and other post-retirement benefits for employees. Funding from other federal agencies is recorded as an imputed financing source.

#### **K. Net Position**

USAGM's net position contains the following components:

##### **Unexpended Appropriations**

This is the sum of undelivered orders and unobligated balances. Undelivered orders represent the amount of obligations incurred for goods or services ordered, but not yet received. An unobligated balance is the amount available after deducting cumulative obligations from total budgetary resources. As obligations for goods or services are incurred, the available balance is reduced.

### Cumulative Results of Operations

These include (1) the accumulated difference between revenues and financing sources less expenses since inception; (2) USAGM's investment in capitalized assets financed by appropriation; (3) donations; and (4) unfunded liabilities, for which liquidation may require future congressional appropriations or other budgetary resources.

### L. Management's Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements requires management to make estimates and assumptions affecting the reported amounts of assets, liabilities, revenues, expenses, and the disclosure of contingent liabilities. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

### M. Statement of Net Cost Presentation

The cost and revenue information presented in the Statement of Net Cost is aligned to the two federal broadcasting entities, displayed separately, and the four grantees, or surrogate broadcasters and internet freedom, displayed in the aggregate. Costs of oversight and support offices are allocated between the broadcasting entities. The two overarching strategic goals outlined in the Strategic Plan are (1) Expand freedom of information and expression, and (2) Communicate America's democratic experience. Both federal entities and all four grantees carry out activities to achieve these goals. VOA's mission aligns directly with USAGM's second goal, and its efforts are largely focused on achieving this goal, while the other entities are primarily focused on achieving the first goal.

### NOTE 2: ENTITY / NON-ENTITY ASSETS

Entity and Non-Entity assets of USAGM have been combined on the balance sheet. Non-entity assets relate primarily to state and local taxes and other employee payroll withholdings included under FBWT deposit accounts and are currently held by but not available to USAGM. The funds are restricted by nature and will be forwarded to Treasury or other entities at a future date.

Non-entity assets as of September 30, 2021 and 2020 are summarized as follows:

<b>Non-Entity Assets (in thousands)</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
Intragovernmental:		
Fund Balance with Treasury	\$ 2,944	\$ 2,945
Total Intragovernmental	2,944	2,945
Total Non-Entity Assets	2,944	2,945
Total Entity Assets	393,278	393,227
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 396,222</b>	<b>\$ 396,172</b>

### NOTE 3: FUND BALANCE WITH TREASURY

Treasury performs cash management activities for all federal agencies. The Fund Balance with Treasury (FBWT) represents the right of USAGM to draw down funds from Treasury for expenses and liabilities. The balances in Note 3 are reconciled to Treasury and primarily consist of appropriated, trust, deposit and clearing funds.

Appropriated funds are general fund expenditure accounts established to record amounts appropriated by law for the general support of Federal Government activities and the subsequent expenditure of these funds. It includes spending from both annual and permanent appropriations.

Trust fund balances consist primarily of (1) Foreign Service National Separation Liability Trust; and (2) Miscellaneous Trust.

Other Fund types consist of Deposit and Clearing accounts with balances held but not available by USAGM. Deposit fund examples are: Withheld State and Local Taxes (payroll); Other Federal Payroll Withholdings; Collections of receivables from Canceled Accounts; and General Funds Proprietary Receipts, Not Otherwise Classified. Clearing fund examples are: Proceeds of Sales, Personal Property; and Budget Clearing Account (Suspense).

The Status of Fund Balance with Treasury as of September 30, 2021 and 2020, consists of the following:

<b>Status of Fund Balance with Treasury (in thousands)</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
Unobligated Balance		
Available	\$ 42,665	\$ 56,331
Unavailable	27,849	27,091
Obligated Balance Not Yet Disbursed	180,293	164,554
Non-Budgetary Fund Balance with Treasury	2,951	2,978
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 253,758</b>	<b>\$ 250,954</b>

The status of the fund balance may be classified as unobligated available, unobligated unavailable, obligated balance not yet disbursed, and non-budgetary Fund Balance with Treasury. Unobligated available funds, depending on budget authority, are generally available for new obligations in the current fiscal year. The unobligated unavailable amounts are those appropriated in prior fiscal years but not available to fund new obligations; however they are available to increase existing prior year obligations. The obligated but not yet disbursed balance represents amounts designated for payment of goods and services ordered but not yet received, or goods and services received but for which payment has not yet been made.

Canceled funds returned to Treasury as of September 30, 2021 and 2020 totaled \$2.4 million and \$8.6 million, respectively.

#### **NOTE 4: CASH AND OTHER MONETARY ASSETS**

Cash consists of funds held outside of Treasury and the Federal Reserve by authorized fiscal officers or agents. Cash includes all monetary resources on hand or on deposit with a financial institution, including coins, paper currency, and readily negotiable instruments such as checks and money orders. USAGM's use of unrestricted cash consists of funds on deposit with a Treasury designated financial institution, for use by the transmitting stations of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, as delegated by Treasury.



Cash and Other Monetary Assets as of September 30, 2021 and 2020 consists of the following:

<b>Cash and Other Monetary Assets (in thousands)</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
Cash	\$ 3	\$ 3
<b>Total Cash and Other Monetary Assets</b>	<b>\$ 3</b>	<b>\$ 3</b>

#### NOTE 5: ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE, NET

Accounts receivable as of September 30, 2021 and 2020, are as follows:

<b>Accounts Receivable (in thousands)</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
Intragovernmental	\$ 193	\$ 242
Public	53	76
Allowance for Uncollectible Accounts	(5)	(5)
<b>Total Accounts Receivable, Net</b>	<b>\$ 241</b>	<b>\$ 313</b>

An allowance for uncollectible accounts is established on an individual account basis based on an overall assessment of the debtor's willingness and ability to pay. Delinquent debts are referred to Treasury in accordance with the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996.

#### NOTE 6: PROPERTY, PLANT, AND EQUIPMENT, NET

Property, plant, and equipment (PP&E) consist of equipment, buildings, vehicles, and land. There are no restrictions on the use of property, plant, and equipment. USAGM capitalizes property, plant, and equipment with a useful life of two years or more that meet the established capitalization thresholds. In FY 2017, USAGM updated the PP&E policy for capitalization. The thresholds for capitalization are as follows for property acquired on or after October 1, 2016: equipment costing \$75,000 or more, buildings and capital leases costing \$100,000 or more, and other structures and facilities costing \$100,000 or more. In addition, ADP software costing \$250,000 or more, and all land, land rights, and vehicles are capitalized, regardless of cost.

The thresholds for capitalization are as follows for property acquired before October 1, 2016: equipment costing \$25,000 or more, buildings and capital leases costing \$100,000 or more, and other structures and facilities costing \$50,000 or more. In addition, ADP software costing \$250,000 or more, and all land, land rights, and vehicles are capitalized, regardless of cost.

Expenditures for normal repairs and maintenance are expended unless the expenditure is equal to or greater than \$75,000 and the improvement increases the asset's useful life by two years or more, in which case the amounts are capitalized.

Depreciation or amortization is computed using the straight-line methodology over the assets' useful lives ranging from three to thirty years. Amortization of capitalized software begins on the date it is put in service, if purchased, or when the module or component has been successfully tested if developed internally.

Property, plant, and equipment consists of property used in operations and consumed over time. The following table summarizes cost and accumulated depreciation/amortization of property, plant, and equipment as of September 30, 2021 and 2020.

PP&E (in thousands)			2021			2020		
Property Category	Useful Life (Years)	Cost	Accumulated Depreciation	Net Book Value	Cost	Accumulated Depreciation	Net Book Value	
Land	N/A	\$ 3,416	\$ -	\$ 3,416	\$ 3,416	\$ -	\$ 3,416	
Construction-in-Progress	N/A	417	-	417	633	-	633	
Building	30	24,279	(21,249)	3,030	24,279	(20,669)	3,610	
Other Structures	20	6,217	(5,955)	262	6,217	(5,921)	296	
Equipment	6-30	296,325	(262,900)	33,425	296,412	(253,714)	42,698	
Vehicles	6	5,761	(4,441)	1,320	5,728	(4,103)	1,625	
Leasehold Improvements	10-20	7,472	(3,078)	4,394	7,472	(2,519)	4,953	
Software	3-6	6,590	(6,203)	387	7,511	(6,037)	1,474	
Total		<u>\$ 350,477</u>	<u>\$ (303,826)</u>	<u>\$ 46,651</u>	<u>\$ 351,668</u>	<u>\$ (292,963)</u>	<u>\$ 58,705</u>	

Depreciation and amortization expense as of September 30, 2021 and 2020 is \$12.0 million and \$12.4 million, respectively.

On October 24th, 2018, Super Typhoon Yutu made landfall on Saipan and Tinian, the largest islands of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI). It severely damaged USAGM's transmitting infrastructure (collectively called the Robert E. Kamosa Transmitting Station, or REKTS). As a

Category 5 Super Typhoon, Yutu devastated the facilities at both sites, and all shortwave broadcasts from CNMI to North Korea, China, and other target countries in East Asia were disrupted. Operations were impacted, but the transmission infrastructure was not destroyed. While the curtain antennas and screens were shredded and/or knocked down by the wind, the towers remained largely intact. REKTS took immediate steps to restore broadcast capabilities. REKTS had five of sixteen shortwave antennas systems fully restored using parts salvaged from the field by the end of FY 2020. USAGM ordered six replacement antenna systems, of which two have been received. The expectation was to have nine antenna systems fully restored by the end of FY 2021. However, the pandemic hampered the recovery process having delayed both antenna delivery and reconstruction efforts. With pandemic protocols having kept site access to a minimum, installation of only one of the two new systems received have commenced. Furthermore, factory fabrication and delivery of the four remaining systems on order has been delayed until mid FY22. Installation of these systems will be scheduled once we have clarity on additional funding requirements. Total assets held in CNMI have an approximate book value of \$6.1 million as of September 30, 2021.

#### **NOTE 7: ADVANCES TO SURROGATE BROADCASTERS AND INTERNET FREEDOM**

The advance to surrogate broadcasters and internet freedom (or grantees) represents an amount in which USAGM has disbursed funds but for which goods and services have not been delivered or performed. Grant funds are issued periodically throughout the year on an advance basis and liquidated based on actual expenses incurred by the grantee. The grant advance liquidation approach utilizes expenses as recorded in the grantee's preliminary unaudited Trial Balances through September of the year being audited. In some instances, grantees provided estimates for expenses and year-end adjustments for activity incurred but not recorded in the preliminary trial balance due to timing and availability. The grantee advance accrual does not account for grantee executed vendor contracts awarded where services have not been received by the grantee as of year-end.

Advances to surrogate broadcasters and internet freedom for the years ended September 30, 2021 and 2020 are \$95.0 million and \$85.5 million, respectively.

## NOTE 8: OTHER PREPAID ASSETS

Other assets consist of (a) leases and other expenses that are paid in advance; and, (b) advances and prepayments to USAGM employees for official travel, miscellaneous prepayments, and salary advances to USAGM employees transferring to overseas assignments. Other assets consist of the following as of September 30, 2021 and 2020:

<b>Other Prepaid Assets (in thousands)</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
Prepaid Leases	\$ 545	\$ 675
Travel & Salary Advances	24	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 569</b>	<b>\$ 697</b>

## NOTE 9: LIABILITIES NOT COVERED BY BUDGETARY RESOURCES

USAGM's liabilities are classified as liabilities covered by budgetary resources, liabilities not covered by budgetary resources, or liabilities not requiring budgetary resources. Liabilities not covered by budgetary resources are liabilities for which Congressional action is needed before budgetary resources can be provided. They include the annual leave, workers compensation, pensions and other retirement benefits, contingent liabilities, and environmental liabilities. Liabilities not requiring budgetary resources are for liabilities that have not in the past required nor will they in the future require the use of budgetary resources.

<b>Liabilities Covered / Not Covered by Budgetary Resources (in thousands)</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>Intragovernmental</b>		
Accrued FECA Liability	\$ 1,298	\$ 1,350
Total Intragovernmental	1,298	1,350
<b>Public</b>		
Actuarial FECA Liability	7,754	8,080
Accrued Annual and Compensatory Leave	21,805	21,338
Contingent Liabilities	4,826	4,389
Foreign Service National After-Employment Benefits	7,090	6,586
Environmental and Disposal Liabilities	823	735
Total Liabilities Not Covered by Budgetary Resources	43,596	42,478
Total Liabilities Covered by Budgetary Resources	40,072	34,458
Total Liabilities Not Requiring Budgetary Resources	2,116	2,116
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 85,784</b>	<b>\$ 79,052</b>

Liabilities Not Covered by Budgetary Resources as of September 30, 2021 and 2020 are summarized below.

**NOTE 10: FOREIGN SERVICE NATIONALS (FSN) AFTER-EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS**

USAGM operates overseas in 23 countries and employs approximately 280 local nationals known as Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs). FSNs do not qualify for federal civilian benefits, and therefore cannot participate in any of the federal civilian retirement plans. Instead, FSN employees participate in a variety of plans established by the Department of State based upon prevailing wage and compensation practices in the host country, unless the Department of State makes a public interest determination to do otherwise. In general, USAGM follows host country (i.e., local) practices and conventions in compensating FSNs. The end result is that compensation for FSNs is often not in accordance with what would otherwise be offered or required by statute and regulations for federal civilian employees.

FSN after-employment benefits are included in the Post's Local Compensation Plan (LCP). The LCP may include defined benefit plans, defined contribution plans, and retirement and voluntary severance lump sum payment plans. These plans are typically in addition to or in lieu of participating in the host country's local social security system. These benefits form an important part of USAGM's total compensation and benefits program that is designed to attract and retain highly skilled and talented FSN employees. USAGM has implemented various local arrangements with third party providers for defined contribution plans for the benefit of FSNs.

**Defined Benefit Plans**

USAGM has implemented various arrangements for defined benefit pension plans for the benefit of FSNs in 4 countries. Some of these plans supplement the host country's equivalent to U.S. social security and others do not. While none of these supplemental plans are mandated by the host country, some are substitutes for optional tiers of a host country's social security system. Such arrangements include (but are not limited to) conventional defined benefit plans with assets held in the name of trustees of the plan who engage plan administrators, investment advisors and actuaries, and plans offered by insurance companies at predetermined rates or with annual adjustments to premiums. USAGM deposits

funds under various fiduciary-type arrangements, purchases annuities under group insurance contracts or provides reserves to these plans. Benefits under the defined benefit plans are typically based either on years of service and/or the employee's compensation (generally during a fixed number of years immediately before retirement). The range of assumptions that are used for the defined benefit plans reflects the different economic and regulatory environments within the various countries. The net defined benefit liability is comprised of the present value of the defined benefit obligation less the fair value of plan assets.

#### Retirement and Voluntary Severance Lump Sum Payments

In 11 countries, FSN employees are provided a lump-sum separation payment when they resign, retire, or otherwise separate through no fault of their own. The amount of the payment is generally based on length of service, rate of pay at the time of separation, and the type of separation.

The cost method used for the valuation of the liabilities associated with these plans is the Projected Unit Credit actuarial cost method. The participant's benefit is first determined using both their projected service and salary at the retirement date. The projected benefit is then multiplied by the ratio of current service to projected service at retirement in order to determine an allocated benefit. The Projected Benefit Obligation (PBO) for the entire plan is calculated as the sum of the individual PBO amounts for each active member. Further, this calculation requires certain actuarial assumptions be made, such as voluntary withdrawals, assumed retirement age, death and disability, as well as economic assumptions. These are done by the Department of State and its actuaries whose results are provided to the federal agencies for their use. USAGM relies on the actuarial reports to obtain required financial information.

The total liabilities reported for the FSN After-employment Benefits as of September 30, 2021 and 2020 are as follows:

<b>After-Employment Benefit Liability (in thousands)</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
Defined Benefits Plans	\$ 700	\$ 168
Voluntary Severance	2,055	2,230
Supplemental Retirement Lump Sum	4,335	4,188
<b>Total After-Employment Benefit Liability</b>	<b>\$ 7,090</b>	<b>\$ 6,586</b>

## NOTE 11: ENVIRONMENTAL AND DISPOSAL LIABILITIES

Environmental and disposal liabilities result from hazardous and potentially hazardous materials at current operating locations and abandoned facilities that create a public health or environmental risk. The related cleanup cost to remove, contain or dispose of any hazardous materials or properties is recognized as an environmental and disposal liability until the end of the useful life of the PP&E or until the operations at the PP&E locations cease either permanently, temporarily, or until a voluntary remediation approach is adopted.

Federal, state, and local statutes and regulations require environmental cleanup. Some of these statutes include the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act; The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act; as well as State and Local laws.

Through an internal survey to comply with SFFAS 5, *Accounting for Liabilities of the Federal Government*, SFFAS 6, *Accounting for Property, Plant and Equipment*, FASAB Technical Bulletin 2006-1, *Recognition and Measurement of Asbestos-related Cleanup Costs* and Federal Financial Accounting and Auditing (FFAA) Technical Release 2, *Determining Probable and Reasonably Estimable for Environmental Liabilities in the Federal Government*, Technical Release 10, *Implementation Guidance on Asbestos*. Of

USAGM recognizes an estimated \$215 thousand in cleanup cost to remove hazardous materials from a transmitter facility. The estimate was received in previous years and the facility disposition has not changed.

Cleanup Costs Associated with Facilities and Installed Equipment, and Technical Release 11, *Implementation Guidance on Cleanup Costs Associated with Equipment*, USAGM in FY 2013 identified offices and building facilities that contained non-friable and friable asbestos. Based on this survey, USAGM has recognized an estimated asbestos cleanup liability in the amount of \$608 thousand for four of its overseas facilities. The total estimate is based on the vendor quotes provided for asbestos cleanup-efforts adjusted for September 30, 2021 currency exchange rates. The total estimated potential environmental liability including removal of hazardous materials and asbestos for USAGM in FY 2021 is \$823 thousand.

## NOTE 12: OTHER LIABILITIES

Other liabilities consist of the following as of September 30, 2021:

Other Liabilities ( <i>in thousands</i> )	Non-Current	Current	2021 Total
<b>Intragovernmental</b>			
Advances and Prepayments	\$ -	\$ 12	\$ 12
Employer Contribution/Payroll Taxes	-	2,909	2,909
Total Intragovernmental	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 2,921</u>	<u>\$ 2,921</u>
<b>Public</b>			
Contingent Liabilities	-	4,826	4,826
Deposit and Suspense Liabilities	-	2,116	2,116
<b>Total Other Liabilities</b>	<u><b>\$ -</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 9,863</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 9,863</b></u>

## NOTE 13: OPERATING LEASE LIABILITY

USAGM leases real property in overseas and domestic locations under operating leases that expire in various years. The threshold for operating lease review and disclosure is \$50,000 in total lease payments. USAGM has three real property leases with the General Services Administration that are cancelable with a four month notice. Minimum future lease payments under non-cancelable and cancelable operating leases having remaining terms in excess of one year as of September 30, 2021 for each of the next 5 years and in aggregate follows:

<b>Non-Cancelable Operating Leases (<i>in thousands</i>)</b>			
Fiscal Year	Federal	Non-Federal	Total
2022	\$ 314	\$ 997	\$ 1,311
2023	304	538	842
2024	304	483	787
2025	304	316	620
2026	304	252	556
2027 and there after	713	602	1,315
<b>Total Future Lease Payments</b>	<u><b>\$ 2,243</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 3,188</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 5,431</b></u>

<b>Cancelable Operating Leases (<i>in thousands</i>)</b>			
Fiscal Year	Federal	Non-Federal	Total
2022	\$ 16,788	\$ 128	\$ 16,916
2023	16,788	128	16,916
2024	16,788	127	16,915
2025	16,788	71	16,859
2026	16,788	-	16,788
2027 and there after	35,933	-	35,933
<b>Total Future Lease Payments</b>	<u><b>\$ 119,873</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 454</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 120,327</b></u>



**NOTE 14: CONTINGENT LIABILITIES**

USAGM is a party in various administrative proceedings, legal actions, and tort claims that may ultimately result in settlements or decisions adverse to the Federal Government. These include legal cases that have been settled but not yet paid, and claims where the amount of potential loss is probable and estimable. No amounts have been accrued in the financial records for claims where the amount of potential loss cannot be estimated or the likelihood of an unfavorable outcome is less than probable. The accrued and potential contingent liabilities as of September 30, 2021 and 2020 are as follows. The Agency does not have any material environmental or other contingent liabilities to disclose.

Legal Contingent Liabilities (in thousands)				
	FY 2021	Accrued Liabilities	Estimated Range of Loss	
			Lower End of Range	Upper End of Range
Probable		\$ 4,826	\$ 4,826	\$ 4,826
Reasonably Possible		-	-	645
	FY 2020	Accrued Liabilities	Estimated Range of Loss	
			Lower End of Range	Upper End of Range
Probable		\$ 4,389	\$ 4,389	\$ 4,389
Reasonably Possible		-	-	475

**NOTE 15: UNDELIVERED ORDERS AT THE END OF THE PERIOD**

Budgetary resources obligated for undelivered orders for the years ended September 30, 2021 and 2020 are \$233.9 million and \$224.1 million, respectively.

<b>Undelivered Orders at the End of the Period (in thousands)</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>Federal</b>		
Unpaid	\$ 2,212	\$ 2,682
<b>Total Federal Undelivered Orders at the end of the period</b>	<b>\$ 2,212</b>	<b>\$ 2,682</b>
<b>Public</b>		
Paid	\$ 95,569	\$ 86,197
Unpaid	136,142	135,261
<b>Total Public Undelivered Orders at the end of the period</b>	<b>\$ 231,711</b>	<b>\$ 221,458</b>
<b>Undelivered Orders at the end of the period</b>	<b>\$ 233,923</b>	<b>\$ 224,140</b>

## NOTE 16: EXPLANATION OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SBR AND THE BUDGET OF THE US GOVERNMENT

A comparison between the FY 2021 Statement of Budgetary Resources and the FY 2021 actual numbers presented in the FY 2023 Budget cannot be performed as the FY 2023 Budget is not yet available. The FY 2023 Budget is due to be published in February 2022 and will be available at:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/>

USAGM reconciled the amounts of the FY 2020 column on the statement of Budgetary Resources (SBR) to the actual amounts for FY 2020 in the FY 2022 President's Budget for budgetary resources, obligations incurred, distributed offsetting receipts and net outlays published in May 2021, as presented below.

<b>For the Fiscal Year Ended September 30, 2020 (in millions)</b>	<b>Budgetary Resources</b>	<b>Obligations Incurred</b>	<b>Distributed Offsetting Receipts</b>	<b>Net Outlays</b>
Combined Statement of Budgetary Resources	\$ 902	\$ 819	\$ -	\$ 797
Expired Accounts	(29)	(2)	-	-
Rounding	-	(1)	-	-
<b>Budget of the United States Government</b>	<b>\$ 873</b>	<b>\$ 816</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 797</b>

## NOTE 17: RECONCILIATION OF NET COST OF OPERATIONS TO NET OUTLAYS

There are inherent differences in timing and recognition between the accrual proprietary accounting method used to calculate net cost and the budgetary accounting method used to report net outlays and obligations. A required reconciliation between budgetary and financial accounting information established by Statement of Federal Financial Accounting Standards (SFFAS) 7, *Accounting for Revenue and Other Financing Sources and Concepts for Reconciling Budgetary and Financial Accounting* has been amended by SFFAS 53: *Budget and Accrual Reconciliation*. This Statement provides for the budget and accrual reconciliation (BAR). The BAR explains the relationship between the entity's net outlays on a budgetary basis and the net cost of operations during the reporting period. The reconciliation of net cost to net outlays as of September 30, 2021 and 2020 is as follows:

Reconciliation of Net Operating Cost and Net Budgetary Outlays (in thousands)	Intragovernmental	With the Public	Total FY2021	Intragovernmental	With the Public	Total FY2020
Net Cost	\$ 106,416	\$ 713,051	\$ 819,467	\$ 102,030	\$ 718,553	\$ 820,583
<b>Components of Net Operating Cost Not Part of the Budgetary Outlays</b>						
Property, plant, and equipment depreciation		(11,989)	(11,989)		(12,444)	(12,444)
Property, plant, and equipment disposals and revaluations		(360)	(360)		(412)	(412)
Other		9	9		106	106
<b>Increase/(decrease) in assets:</b>						
Accounts receivable	(49)	(22)	(71)	194	(8)	186
Other assets	-	9,372	9,372	(245)	6,674	6,429
<b>(Increase)/decrease in liabilities:</b>						
Accounts payable	(714)	(3,921)	(4,635)	(1,246)	1,945	699
Environmental and disposal liabilities		(88)	(88)		184	184
Federal employee and veteran benefits payable		(650)	(650)		(4,434)	(4,434)
Other liabilities	31	(1,390)	(1,359)	42	(4,894)	(4,852)
<b>Financing Sources:</b>						
Imputed Cost	(12,220)	-	(12,220)	(11,320)		(11,320)
<b>Total Components of Net Operating Cost Not Part of the Budget Outlays</b>	(12,952)	(9,039)	(21,991)	(12,575)	(13,283)	(25,858)
<b>Components of the Budget Outlays That Are Not Part of Net Operating Cost</b>						
Acquisition of capital assets		295	295		2,021	2,021
<b>Financing Sources:</b>						
Transfers out (in) without reimbursements	426		426	395		395
<b>Total Components of the Budgetary Outlays That Are Not Part of Net Operating Cost</b>	426	295	721	395	2,021	2,416
<b>Misc Items</b>						
Non-Entity Activity				344		344
<b>Total Other Reconciling Items</b>	-	-	-	344	-	344
<b>Net Outlays (Calculated Total)</b>	\$ 93,890	\$ 704,307	\$ 798,197	\$ 90,194	\$ 707,291	\$ 797,485
<b>Budgetary Agency Outlays, net (SBR 4210)</b>			\$ 798,197			\$ 797,485
Budgetary Agency Outlays, net						

## NOTE 18: DISCLOSURE ENTITIES AND RELATED PARTIES

Under SFFAS 47, agencies must disclose certain information for entities that must be included, but not consolidated, in their financial statements referred to as “disclosure entities” or related parties. USAGM has four such disclosure entities.

USAGM broadcast services include four USAGM-sponsored grantees: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Radio Free Asia (RFA), the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN), and the Open Technology Fund (OTF). RFE/RL, RFA, MBN are surrogate networks that receive the majority of their funding from USAGM, but are organized and managed as private non-profit corporations. The grantees are also responsible for developing broadcast content (radio and television news programs), which is distributed by USAGM. OTF was previously housed at RFA, and was separately incorporated as an independent grantee in FY 2019; it focuses on projects supported by USAGM’s internet freedom budget. The grantees are funded through annual grant agreements. In FY 2021, the four grantees combined received \$299 million in grant funding.

RFE/RL, Inc. is a private, nonprofit, multimedia broadcasting corporation that serves as a surrogate media source in 27 languages and in 23 countries, including Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, and Ukraine. With its broadcasting headquarters in Prague, 19 local bureaus (including Moscow, Kyiv, Budapest, and Bucharest) and 1,900 journalists throughout its broadcast region, RFE/RL's proximity to its audiences facilitates the production of compelling, locally-oriented programming in a cost-effective manner. RFE/RL utilizes many different platforms to reach its audiences including 6.5 billion combined video views via YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Instagram TV (IGTV). Reaching more than 41.1 million people each week, RFE/RL provides what many people cannot get locally: uncensored local and regional news, responsible discussion, and open debate via radio, television, and digital media.

Radio Free Asia (RFA) is headquartered in Washington, D.C., with six bureaus and offices overseas. RFA is a private, nonprofit, multimedia news corporation with approximately 270 employees. RFA has an estimated audience of 6.9 million people and supports nine languages. Radio Free Asia's mission is to provide accurate and timely news and information to Asian countries whose governments prohibit access to a free press. RFA brings award-winning, domestic journalism and uncensored content to people in six Asian countries that restrict free speech, freedom of the press, and access to reliable information beyond their borders. RFA also provides educational and cultural programming, as well as forums for audiences to engage in open dialogue and freely express opinions.

Middle East Broadcasting Network (MBN) is an Arabic-language news organization that broadcasts news and current affairs programming to audience in the Middle East and North Africa reaching more than 25.7 million people in 22 countries. MBN consists of two television networks (Alhurra and Alhurra-Iraq); Radio Sawa; Alhurra.com; RadioSawa.com; Irfaasawtak.com; Maghreb Voices; ElSaha.com and various social media platforms. The networks broadcast news and information from their headquarters in Northern Virginia, along with bureaus in Cairo, Dubai, Jerusalem, Beirut, Erbil, Rabat, Baghdad, and Washington, D.C. MBN has an estimated 700 employees including correspondents throughout the Middle East and North Africa. The mission of the Middle East Broadcasting Networks is to expand the spectrum of ideas, opinions and perspectives available in the media of Middle East and North Africa; provide

objective, accurate, and relevant news and information; and, accurately represent America, Americans, and American policies.

Open Technology Fund (OTF) was incorporated as an independent non-profit organization and became a non-federal grantee of USAGM in September 2019. OTF enhances USAGM's mission to “inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy” by supporting the applied research, development, implementation, and maintenance of technologies that provide secure and uncensored access to USAGM’s content and the broader internet and counter attempts by authoritarian governments to control the internet and restrict freedom online. Originally created in 2012 as a program of Radio Free Asia, this standalone, non-profit entity supports the digital security needs of USAGM broadcast networks while also creating a more streamlined and efficient system for identifying, supporting, and iterating the next generation of internet freedom technologies. In response to growing threats to Internet freedom, over the last fiscal year, OTF funded over 60 innovative technology projects to combat censorship and repressive surveillance, 22 fellowships to support cutting-edge research and digital security interventions, seven labs to improve the security, usability, resiliency and interoperability of key internet freedom technologies, and over 50 rapid response interventions to address digital emergencies.

USAGM is party to some grantee lease commitments for land and buildings, and may have a financial commitment in the event of lease termination. However, for most ongoing grantee lease and employee benefit commitments, USAGM and the US Government does not have an explicit agreement to support or commitment to fund upon any termination of the current relationship.

The risks resulting from USAGM involvement with the grantee entities during the period include:

- The financial commitment made each year through the current grant agreement
- Potential termination costs resulting from the termination of certain grantee leases

The USAGM’s benefits resulting from USAGM’s involvement with include:

- Support in development of common content and delivery
- Access to office space in certain markets

The primary financial asset existing between grantees and USAGM is the grant advance.

Approximately 99% of the grantees' revenue for the years ended September 30, 2021 and 2020 was derived from grants from USAGM through federal appropriations. USAGM has no contractual or statutory provisions requiring future support, however there is no reason to believe that the relationships with these grantees will be discontinued in the foreseeable future. However, any interruption of these relationships (i.e., the failure to renew grant agreements or withholding of funds) would adversely affect the grantees' ability to finance ongoing operations.

USAGM does not believe there is any material financial exposure to gain or loss resulting from its involvement with the grantees.

Each of the grantee's annual financial reports can be obtained from the Federal Audit Clearinghouse which operates on behalf of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to maintain a public database of completed audits. The website can be located at: <https://harvester.census.gov/facweb/>

USAGM has no related party entity information to disclose.

# Required Supplementary Information

## DEFERRED MAINTENANCE

Deferred maintenance is maintenance that was not performed when it should have been, that was scheduled and not performed, or that was delayed for a future period. Maintenance is the act of keeping property, plant, and equipment (PP&E) in acceptable operating condition and includes preventive maintenance, normal repairs, replacement of parts and structural components, and other activities needed to preserve the asset so that it can deliver acceptable performance and achieve its expected life. Maintenance excludes activities aimed at expanding the capacity of an asset or otherwise upgrading it to serve needs different from or significantly greater than those needs originally intended to be met by the asset.

USAGM has an ongoing maintenance and repair plan for its PP&E that allows it to prioritize required maintenance on its assets and schedule that maintenance appropriately. The maintenance plan is developed and updated by an inspection of its assets to determine current conditions and to estimate costs to correct any deficiencies. It is the policy of USAGM to maintain and preserve all PP&E regardless of recorded values and it does not differentiate between PP&E that is capitalized versus those that are expensed.

USAGM reviewed its FY 2021 maintenance and repair plan and identified those projects where maintenance or repair had been planned and/or required but nevertheless was not performed in 2021. For those projects where maintenance was not performed and where the current condition level required maintenance to return them to an acceptable level, in accordance with the amended SFFAS Deferred Maintenance Repairs No. 42, USAGM estimates and discloses deferred maintenance cost.

<b>Deferred Maintenance (in thousands)</b>			
<b>PP&amp;E Category</b>	<b>FY 2021 Estimated Cost to Return to Acceptable Condition</b>		<b>FY 2020 Estimated Cost to Return to Acceptable Condition</b>
Equipment	\$	398	\$ 869
Other Structures & Facilities		23	106
Building		46	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>\$ 975</b>

## Section 4: Other Information

Inspector General’s Statement on FY 2021 Management and Performance Challenges .....	218
Agency Response to the Management and Performance Challenges .....	224
Summary of Financial Statement Audit and Management Assurances .....	227
Reporting on Payment Integrity .....	229
Report on Grants Oversight & New Efficiency (GONE) Act Requirements .....	230



# Inspector General's Statement on Management and Performance Challenges



Office of Inspector General  
United States Department of State

## Inspector General Statement on the U.S. Agency for Global Media's Major Management and Performance Challenges

FISCAL YEAR 2021

## CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION.....	1
INFORMATION SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT .....	1
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT .....	2
GRANTS MANAGEMENT .....	3
WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT .....	3

## INTRODUCTION

Each year, in accordance with the Reports Consolidation Act of 2000,<sup>1</sup> the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) identifies the most significant management and performance challenges facing the agency and briefly assesses progress in addressing those challenges. The resulting report is included in the agency's annual performance and accountability report.

OIG identified the following management challenges in FY 2021:

- Information security and management
- Financial management
- Grant management
- Workforce management

These issues go to the core of USAGM's programs and operations. Continued attention to these concerns will improve USAGM's operations and, accordingly, its ability to fulfill its underlying mission. OIG provides this report so that, taken together with the work OIG produces through the year, USAGM can institute appropriate measures to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness.

## INFORMATION SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT

USAGM depends on information systems and electronic data to carry out essential mission-related functions. These information systems are subject to serious threats that may exploit vulnerabilities to compromise the information those systems process, store, and transmit. This, in turn, can lead to adverse effects on operations, organizational assets, and personnel.

In the FY 2020 Federal Information Security Modernization Act audit of USAGM's information security program, an independent auditor identified security weaknesses in six of eight metric domains, which consist of risk management, configuration management, identity and access management, data protection and privacy, information security continuous monitoring, and contingency planning.<sup>2</sup>

One reason for the deficiencies identified was the difficulties created by COVID-19 restrictions during FY 2020. For example, USAGM officials stated that progress on efforts to distribute personal identity cards was delayed due to restrictions related to working on site. Furthermore, although USAGM

<sup>1</sup> The Reports Consolidation Act of 2000, § 3, Pub. L. 106-531 (amending 31 U.S.C. § 3516).

<sup>2</sup> OIG, *Audit of the U.S. Agency for Global Media FY 2020 Information Security Program* (AUD-IT-IB-21-21, March 2021).

continued to implement several IT-related initiatives during FY 2020, it was unable to complete those initiatives for several reasons. For example, USAGM focused its IT resources to support employees performing remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic. USAGM officials also stated that a continuous diagnostics and mitigation tool that was implemented in FY 2020 was unreliable, so they had to procure and implement a new tool, which took more time than anticipated. USAGM also stated that inadequate staffing impacted USAGM's ability to address certain deficiencies.<sup>3</sup>

Managing information security risks effectively is critical to achieving USAGM's mission. Until an effective information security program is in place, USAGM will remain vulnerable to IT-focused attacks as well as to threats to its critical mission-related functions.

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

As in previous years, an independent auditor reported issues related to unliquidated obligations (ULO), which represent amounts of orders, contracts, and other binding agreements for which the goods and services ordered have not been received or have been received but payment has not yet been made. Although USAGM has improved its accounting for ULOs, this weakness has been reported each year since the audit of USAGM's FY 2013 financial statements.<sup>4</sup> USAGM reported approximately \$144 million in ULOs, as of June 30, 2020. The auditor found that 16 percent of a statistical sample of these ULOs were invalid based on expired periods of performance, inactivity, or USAGM's inability to support a bona fide need.<sup>5</sup>

According to USAGM officials, it was difficult to review all obligations quarterly because of a lack of resources, so USAGM elected to focus on the larger dollar value obligations. However, because USAGM has a significant number of smaller dollar obligations, the dollar amount and number of ULOs that were not reviewed quarterly was significant. Additionally, invalid obligations continued to exist because not all contracting officer's representatives and program officials were aware of their responsibility to research and review obligations for validity and bona fide need. Invalid ULOs affect USAGM by leaving funds that could have been used in support of its mission in unneeded obligations.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> ULOs were reported as a significant deficiency in the audit reports on USAGM's financial statements from FY 2013 to FY 2017. In FY 2018, the auditor found that sufficient improvements had been made to decrease the item from a significant deficiency to a management letter item.

<sup>5</sup> OIG, *Management Letter Related to the Audit of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, FY 2020 Financial Statements* (AUD-FM-IB-21-17, February 2021).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

## GRANTS MANAGEMENT

USAGM has four grantees that it funds through annual grant agreements: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, the Middle East Broadcasting Networks, and the Open Technology Fund. Because the grantees perform significant operational activities for USAGM, weaknesses in grant management can have a substantial effect on USAGM's overall operations. Without effective oversight of grantees, the risk of waste, fraud, and abuse of Federal funds increases.

USAGM is responsible for monitoring the use of grant funds to ensure that grantees adhere to applicable laws and regulations as well as to terms and conditions specified in the grant agreements. Although USAGM approved and issued standard operating procedures for grantee monitoring in February 2019, an independent auditor continued to find weaknesses in controls over grantee monitoring (a weakness that has been reported each year since the audit of USAGM's FY 2013 financial statements). Specifically, the auditor tested control activities from the standard operating procedures and found that 7 of 15 activities had not been implemented. For example, USAGM had not reviewed the allowability of grantee costs, performed grant close-outs, conducted formal documented site visits, or monitored equipment purchased by grantees.

According to USAGM officials, they have not fully implemented several key monitoring activities due to personnel and resource limitations. In FY 2020, USAGM planned to engage contractor support to assist with grantee monitoring, but a contract was not issued due to funding constraints. Additionally, USAGM officials indicated that USAGM's ability to oversee one grantee was impaired by active litigation. Because USAGM is the primary funding source for the grantees, an organized and documented approach to oversight is needed to demonstrate accountability and mitigate risk.<sup>7</sup>

## WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

In FY 2021, OIG assessed whether USAGM and its five broadcasting entities (Voice of America, the Office of Cuba Broadcasting, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks) had established journalistic professionalism, independence, and integrity standards that complied with statutory requirements. OIG also assessed whether USAGM and its five networks had established effective mechanisms in the workplace to ensure employee awareness of, and compliance with, journalistic standards and ethical principles.

<sup>7</sup> OIG, *Independent Auditor's Report on the U.S. Agency for Global Media FY 2020 Financial Statements* (AUD-FM-IB-21-10, December 2020).

OIG found USAGM and its five networks had developed guidance that turned the relevant statutory standards and principles into detailed, codified journalistic practices and ethical behaviors that could be communicated, trained, monitored, and enforced. Furthermore, OIG found that USAGM and network leadership generally modeled journalistic standards and independence; they communicated the importance of such standards and independence and took their protection seriously. Nonetheless, although all networks conducted some training on journalistic standards and ethical conduct, OIG found the training was mostly done on an ad hoc basis. Specifically, the networks generally conducted one-time training to address a network leadership initiative or in reaction to a specific concern or violation of journalistic standards. As a result, OIG recommended USAGM direct each network to develop systematic employee training on journalistic standards and related professional development plans.<sup>8</sup> Systematic employee training on journalistic standards will help the networks avoid lapses in meeting the standards. Such lapses can cause damage to the reputation, credibility, and effectiveness of USAGM and its five networks, and can increase the risk that the agency is unable to meet its mission of informing, engaging, and connecting people around the world in support of freedom and democracy.

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<sup>8</sup> OIG, *Targeted Inspection of the U.S. Agency for Global Media: Journalistic Standards and Principles* (ISP-18-21-06, December 2020)

# Agency Response to the Management and Performance Challenges

October 28, 2021

Ms. Diana Shaw  
Acting Inspector General  
Office of Inspector General  
U.S. Department of State

Dear Ms. Shaw:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Office of Inspector General (OIG)'s Statement on the U.S. Agency for Global Media's Major Management and Performance Challenges for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021. I appreciate OIG identifying challenges to agency operations related to information security, financial management, grants management, and training on journalism standards. The U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) has made significant headway on these issues since they were identified in inspection and audit reports over the last fiscal year. I am pleased to highlight USAGM's progress and some of the agency's plans for continued improvement.

## **INFORMATION SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT**

The management challenges statement provided to USAGM for review relies on the FY 2020 Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA) audit of USAGM's information security program. More recently, on October 25, OIG released the FY 2021 FISMA audit report, which reflects the agency's improvements across several FISMA domains, as well as the agency's improved overall information security program maturity level to level 3, "consistently implemented." The report documents how, over the past year, USAGM has made improvements in information security despite challenges the COVID-19 pandemic presented to the agency's IT operations. Notable accomplishments include:

- Deployment of tools and processes to improve our Information Security Continuous Monitoring Program;

- Enactment of USAGM Multi-factor Authentication solutions;
- Implementation of established policies and procedures – specifically within the Risk Management, Security Training, and Incident Response domains, in which USAGM achieved a maturity rating of “Managed and Measurable;”
- Continued implementation of the agency’s Enterprise Risk Management framework and Information Security Risk Management strategy; and
- Development of a Supply Chain Risk Management Strategy, Policy, and Program Plan.

While USAGM has made a great deal of progress over the past year, I also recognize that we must do more. I will ensure my staff are working to continuously improve the agency’s information security program and to achieve FISMA compliance.

## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT – UNLIQUIDATED OBLIGATIONS**

I was pleased to see acknowledgement of steps taken by USAGM to improve accounting for unliquidated obligations (ULO). However, I recognize further attention is needed. To that end, the agency plans to reassess and strengthen our business processes to ensure ULOs are reviewed and managed regularly, systematically, and timely.

## **GRANTS MANAGEMENT**

USAGM appreciates the importance of strong grants management and is working to improve the agency’s policies and procedures and their implementation. Fortunately, USAGM no longer faces some of the impediments to improving grants management that OIG mentions in the management challenges statement. For example, the litigation OIG mentions is over. Additionally, thank you for acknowledging the unique relationship that USAGM has with its grantees and the challenge with applying standard grant management processes within our statutory structure. In light of these unique relationships, USAGM recently awarded a long-planned contract with subject matter experts to help the agency improve grantee oversight and has begun working with the team of subject matter experts to assess opportunities for improvement.



## WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT – JOURNALISM STANDARDS TRAINING

The USAGM network executives and I are actively assessing how most effectively to strengthen journalistic standards training and expand professional development opportunities across the USAGM community. We are all committed to this critically important goal and we plan to take initial, concrete steps to work together to ensure training consistency and take necessary steps to expand training in the coming months. I look forward to updating OIG on USAGM's progress.

My thanks to you and your staff for highlighting these important management challenges for USAGM's attention. I look forward to working with OIG as USAGM endeavors to address the issues presented in this year's management challenges statement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelu Chao', with a stylized, flowing script.

Kelu Chao

Acting Chief Executive Officer

# Summary of Financial Statement Audit and Management Assurances

TABLE 1

## Summary of Financial Statement Audit

Audit Opinion	Unmodified				
Restatement	No				
Material Weaknesses	Beginning Balance	New	Resolved	Consolidated	Ending Balance
Validity and Accuracy of Obligations	0	1			1
Total Material Weaknesses	0	1			1

TABLE 2

**Summary of Management Assurances**

Effectiveness of Internal Control over Financial Reporting (FMFIA § 2)						
Statement of Assurance	Unmodified					
Material Weaknesses	Beginning Balance	New	Resolved	Consolidated	Reassessed	Ending Balance
<i>Total Material Weaknesses</i>	<i>N/A</i>					
Effectiveness of Internal Control over Operations (FMFIA § 2)						
Statement of Assurance	Unmodified					
Material Weaknesses	Beginning Balance	New	Resolved	Consolidated	Reassessed	Ending Balance
<i>Total Material Weaknesses</i>	<i>N/A</i>					
Conformance with financial management system requirements (FMFIA § 4)						
Statement of Assurance	Federal Systems conform to financial management system requirements					
Non-Conformances	Beginning Balance	New	Resolved	Consolidated	Reassessed	Ending Balance
<i>Total Non-Conformances</i>	<i>N/A</i>					

## Reporting on Payment Integrity

The Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019 requires agencies to periodically review all programs and activities, identify those that may be susceptible to significant improper payments, estimate annual improper payments in susceptible programs and activities, and report the results of their improper payment activities. The USAGM is dedicated to maintaining the strength of our improper payments program to ensure payments are legitimate, processed accurately and efficiently. The Office of Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) performs the processes and procedures to comply with the requirements of OMB Circular A-123 Appendix C and reports the USAGM's improper payments annually. A more detailed information on improper payments is available at <https://paymentaccuracy.gov>.

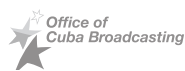
# Report on Grants Oversight & New Efficiency (GONE) Act Requirements

USAGM is comprised of four non-federal entities (NFEs) overseen and funded by USAGM: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Radio Free Asia (RFA), the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN), and the Open Technology Fund (OTF) that receive legislatively mandated grantee funding from USAGM each fiscal year.

The grantees are organized and managed as private, independent, non-profit corporations. Grant funds are issued periodically throughout the year on an advance basis and liquidated based on actual expenses incurred by the grantee. The chart below denotes the number of open grants related to the three designated grantees.

CATEGORY	2-3 Years	>3-5 Years	>5 Years
Number of Grants/Cooperative Agreements with Zero Dollar Balances	7	6	50
Number of Grants/Cooperative Agreements with Undisbursed Balances	-0-	-0-	-0-
Total Amount of Undisbursed Balances	-0-	-0-	-0-

If the grantee has carryover funds, they request approval from USAGM to retain the funds. USAGM reviews the request and makes a determination on the request. Because the nature of the grant is continuous, both for funding and execution of the mission, USAGM does not close out these grant agreements even though there are no undisbursed balances to the grantee remaining.



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